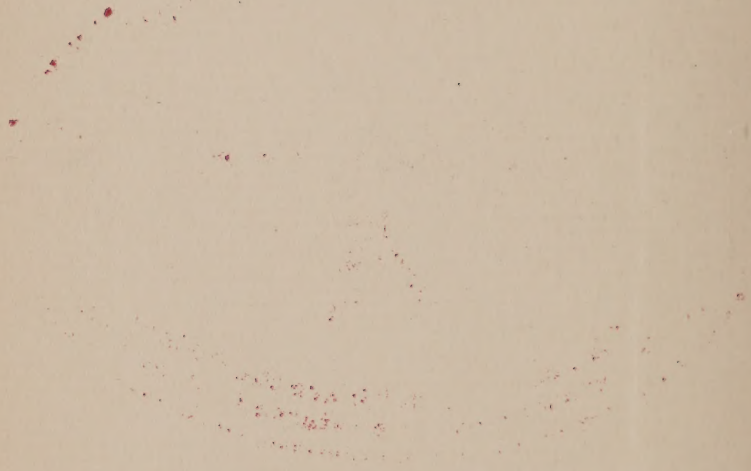

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By William Lindsey

RED WINE OF ROUSSILLON.

THE SEVERED MANTLE. Illustrated in color.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
BOSTON AND NEW YORK

Red Wine of Roussillon

Red Wine of Roussillon

A Play in Four Acts

By William Lindsey

BOSTON and *NEW YORK*
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TO

MY DAUGHTER

LESLIE

The "Siddons" of our family
I dedicate this, my first play

CHARACTERS

RAIMON	*Count of Roussillon*
GUILHEM	*Lord of Cabestaing*
BERGUEDAN	*A Spanish Troubadour*
VIDAL	*A Provençal Troubadour*
AIMAR	*A Priest*
BARRAL	*Raimon's Squire*
PEIRE	*An Innkeeper*
AMFOS	*A Juggler*
AUDIART	*A Tumbler*
TIMON	*A Blind Beggar*
SEREMONDA	*Countess of Roussillon*
GUIDA	*Sister of Seremonda*
ERMENGARDA	*Raimon's Grand-Aunt*
CLARA	*Maid of Inn*
ADELE	*A Tire-Maiden*
MARTHE	*A Lame Beggar*

Villagers, Servants, Etc.

ACT I

SCENE I. *Village of Roussillon.*
Early Morning of First Day.

SCENE II. *Great Hall of Castle.*

ACT II

SCENE I. *The Forest.*
Morning of Second Day.

SCENE II. *The Garden.*

ACT III

SCENE I. *A Tiring-Room.*
Evening of Second Day.

SCENE II. *Great Hall of Castle.*

ACT IV

SCENE I. *Village of Roussillon.*
Morning of Third Day.

SCENE II. *Great Hall of Castle.*
Evening of Third Day.

Red Wine of Roussillon

Act I

Red Wine of Roussillon

Act I. Scene I.

Early morning of a May day, in the latter part of the twelfth century. The village of Roussillon. At the left is a little church. At the back is a rude shrine to the Virgin. On the right is the Inn of the Black Ram with an arbour overgrown by a grape-vine, and opening front. In the distance is seen the tower of the castle. From the square run two streets, one back of the church, the other to the castle. On the steps of the church are two old beggars: one, a blind man fast asleep, his head on his knees; the other, a woman, with a bunch of candles in her hand. As the scene opens there is the sound of rude voices chanting the mass. In the arbour sits Vidal *at a table on which is a beaker of wine, from which he takes long draughts. He is a little*

man with a pointed beard. He is handsomely dressed and affected in speech and manner. He has a sword at his side, and his lute leans against the table. AUDIART *sits in front doorway of the inn, with a tankard of wine between his knees.* VIDAL *throws back his head and drinks the last drop from the beaker, then pounds on the table.* CLARA *emerges from a door of the inn, which opens into the arbour, and runs quickly forward.*

VIDAL

Another stoup! The same wine as the last!

CLARA

Another stoup! What is there wrong with this?
The same wine! Good my Lord, you've drunk it up.
I'll bring its like if that will pleasure you.

VIDAL

Wouldst play with words while I die here with thirst?
Hasten, fair Hebe, for my throat is parched.
Your roads in Languedoc are white with dust.

CLARA

Hebe, forsooth!
I know a dog that bears the selfsame name;
She is a laggard, and her like I'll be;
A Hebe would not hasten for your wine.

(CLARA *walks slowly, but at* VIDAL'S *gesture of appeal, she laughs and runs briskly into the inn.* VIDAL *rises to his feet and struts up and down the arbour. Sings:*)

Love is the wine of life,
We'll drink it, you and I.
Who cares to eat, when love is sweet,
And Nicolette is nigh?

(*Reënter* CLARA *with brimming stoup of wine*)

VIDAL

Be careful, pretty maid! Spill not one drop!

(CLARA *gives stoup to* VIDAL, *who takes a long draught.*)

CLARA

And yet you spill a thousand — down your throat.

VIDAL

It is not wasted there. 'T is royal wine.
Only Olympus boasts a richer grape.
(*Looking admiringly at* CLARA)
Hebe herself is not more fair than thou.

CLARA

A richer grape!
There are no vines like those of Roussillon.
Listen! My name is Clara. Mind it well.
Where is Olympus?

VIDAL

Ten leagues away and famous for its wine.
They call it nectar.

CLARA

Our good red wine is better, that I swear.
Who is this Hebe? Serves she at an inn?

VIDAL

Hebe might be
Your sister, for her arms are round like yours.
Her eyes like yours are blue; her lips are red.
(VIDAL *tries to kiss her, but she turns her face away.*)

A handbreadth taller is she, and her waist —

(VIDAL *tries to embrace her, but she easily holds him at arm's length, laughing at his efforts.*)

CLARA

You need not measure mine!

(BERGUEDAN *enters from street at left. He is a tall man, handsome, of a Spanish type. He is too richly dressed, and walks with a swagger. He is followed by* AMFOS, *who carries a lute.* AMFOS *goes to* AUDIART, *who smiles and offers him the tankard.* AMFOS *drinks after looking suspiciously at it and wiping the brim on his sleeve. He is thin and pale.* BERGUEDAN *crosses the square and looks through the entrance of the arbour, a smile on his face, at* VIDAL *and* CLARA, *who do not notice him.*)

VIDAL

I have a girdle I would give to you,
And yet, how can I know 't will fit your waist?

CLARA

It must be longer than your arm. Take it
To your Olympus where fair Hebe dwells.
Is it the town from whence you came?

(VIDAL *passes an arm around* CLARA, *who no longer repulses him.*)

VIDAL

I am from fair Toulouse; — a troubadour,
Who sings the praise of ladies bountiful.

CLARA

You should be praising God within the church.
They wait for your sweet voice across the way.

VIDAL

My God is love. We'll have a service here.
I'll be the priest and you the acolyte.

(BERGUEDAN *suddenly enters arbour*)

BERGUEDAN

And I the bishop, then.
Go get you gone, my little priest of love.

(BERGUEDAN *seizes* CLARA *and kisses her in*

spite of her struggles. VIDAL *springs up furious, draws his sword and threatens* BERGUEDAN.)

VIDAL

By Saint Sernin! I'll have your life.
You took the girl out of my very arms.
(BERGUEDAN *laughs mockingly.*)

BERGUEDAN

A sparrow hawk has little chance for game
When the gerfalcon's broader wings are free.
Put up your sword or you may prick yourself:
I do not fight with little men like you.
(VIDAL *is about to spring at* BERGUEDAN, *who continues to laugh and does not even draw his sword.* CLARA *throws her arms around* VIDAL, *and holds him tight in spite of his struggles.*)

CLARA

(*Pretending terror*)

Good Messire Vidal! Have a care!
I beg, I pray you do not kill him here.
Think of the good name of the inn.

VIDAL

At your entreaty will I spare his life.
The little man could spit him on this blade,
Cared he to quarrel in a country inn
'Gainst a strange bully with a boasting tongue!

BERGUEDAN
(*Feigning astonishment*)

You do not know me, then?
My name is Berguedan. I am from Spain,
A troubadour, a knight, a gay gallant,
(*Looking at* CLARA)
A lover who has never been denied
By village beauty or by castle dame.

CLARA

I' faith 't is raining troubadours to-day.
And liars too. From what clouds do they fall?
(CLARA *goes to door and examines sky carefully.*)

BERGUEDAN

I did but jest. Come, let's be friends.
(VIDAL, *at first resentful, finally drops his sword and embraces* BERGUEDAN.)

VIDAL

We're brother troubadours. I know your songs,
And mine are carolled by a thousand throats.
You've heard the name of Vidal. Who has not?

BERGUEDAN

Your reputation flames through Aragon.
I'll drink to your good health. My pretty maid,
Come, bring us wine. Fetch us your best.

CLARA

There is no bad wine made in Roussillon:
There is no good. It is all best.

(*Exit* CLARA.)

BERGUEDAN

Have you heard Borneil yet? Queen Rumor says
He is the master of us all.

VIDAL

My master! No. He has no voice at all.
He cannot sing. He only chants his songs.

BERGUEDAN

Well, so do I, and think it better far
Than drown the sense beneath a flood of sound.
The troubadour must be a poet first.

VIDAL

But if he sings, his net is doubly meshed
To catch all hearts. I know it passing well.
I could tell tales.

BERGUEDAN

I'm sure you could, you fisherman of hearts.
What is your voice, a tenor or a bass?

VIDAL

Do you not know? Listen to this.
(VIDAL *sings, ending with a high falsetto note.*)
It's called a "vapour tenor." 'T is unique.

BERGUEDAN

I swear I never heard its like before.
(BERGUEDAN *takes* VIDAL'S *lute up, touches the strings, and examines it carefully.*)
Where got you this?

VIDAL

'T was from the hand of Lady Alazais,
And with it came this chain around my neck,
An ambling palfrey and a well-filled purse;
What else I am too gently bred to tell.

(*Enter* CLARA, *who puts wine on table.* VIDAL *drinks*)

BERGUEDAN

She could deny you nothing, I am sure.
(BERGUEDAN *drinks and smacks his lips.*)
My throat was parched. It is a royal wine.
Whose are the grapes from which this juice was pressed?

CLARA

Far as the eye can reach, each foot of land
Belongs to Raimon, Count of Roussillon,
Or did; the man is dead, God rest his soul!

BERGUEDAN

Dead, say you! Dead! With ruddy wine like this!
He should have lived a hundred happy years.

CLARA

So might he, had he stayed in Roussillon.
He went to Palestine across the sea.

BERGUEDAN

And left untouched one butt of wine like this!
Sit on my knee and tell me why.

CLARA

A gosling with a fox! I'm safer here —
Beyond your reach.

(BERGUEDAN *seizes her and tries to pull her down.* CLARA *gives a little scream.*)

I'll cry so loud I swear
The worshippers will run to rescue me.

(CLARA *smooths her hair and dress and looks resentfully at* BERGUEDAN.)

BERGUEDAN

What if there were no rescuers near?

CLARA

I would not fear you. See this dagger stuck
Within my garter girdle? 'T is a way
We maidens have in merry Languedoc.

(CLARA *shows dagger in garter.*)

VIDAL

Is it a dagger? Let me look again.
(CLARA *drops her skirt with assumed modesty.*)

CLARA

You look not at the blade.

BERGUEDAN

A pretty plaything, truly! By the mass,
My heart is turned to ice at sight of it.
I understand why Raimon ran away.

CLARA
(*Very seriously*)

I'll tell you why. — Our Count of Roussillon
Loved Seremonda, a young demoiselle,
Whose father gave her to another lord.
But on the wedding day, into the church
Rushed Raimon, mad with rage and jealousy.
He slew his rival, bore the lady back
To Roussillon, and married her by force.

BERGUEDAN

She had forgot her dagger, then.
(CLARA *raises her finger warningly.*)

CLARA

The very altar steps were splashed with blood,
And in the mellay e'en the priest was hurt.

BERGUEDAN

He was a fool to strike a priest.

CLARA

All Languedoc was vibrant with the crime,
And punishment came quickly; for the curse
Of Holy Church was put on Raimon's soul.

VIDAL

I like your lusty Lord of Roussillon;
He was a strong man after mine own heart.
What was his penance?

CLARA

They sent him on a weary pilgrimage
To Christ's own river in the Holy Land.

BERGUEDAN

With not a drop of his Roussillon wine!
Died he of thirst?

CLARA

Why mock at sacred things?
He joined the army of the blessed cross,
And in the battle of Tiberias,
Met an untimely fate.

VIDAL

God rest his soul! Death gets us all at last.

CLARA

God save and pardon him.

(*All the time there is the sound of voices in the church celebrating mass. This ceases and the worshippers emerge from the church door.*)

MARTHE

Alms, for the love of God.

TIMON

Help me, a poor blind man.

(*Both continue to cry until the church is emptied. The young men and maidens run*

down the street at right of church. CLARA, VIDAL, *and* BERGUEDAN *stand looking through the vine.*)

CLARA

See how the youths and maidens hurry off.
It is a feast day, and among the fields
They seek the early blooming asphodel.

BERGUEDAN

And if a maid is kissed behind a hedge,
She'll draw the dagger from her garter hung?

CLARA

(*Looking knowingly*)
If she's not kissed she may.

VIDAL

What do they when the sun is high?

CLARA

They gather then before the inn,
And sing an old-world song known only here.
'T is called "The Jealous Husband," and the dance

That goes with it, I swear you never saw
In far Olympus where your Hebe dwells.

Vidal

For village dances I care not.
I'll to the castle; haply I may find
The widowed Seremonda affable. —
And is she fair?

Clara

As sweet as April — and as wayward too.

Vidal

I'll sing to her.

Berguedan

And I. 'T is sweet to bring
Soft consolation to a wife bereft,
If she be young — and beautiful — and rich.

Vidal

I'll wager this gold chain, around my neck,
'Gainst what you will, of value like to like,

I win the first sweet favour from her hand;
Some sign of love, a kerchief or a flower.

(BERGUEDAN *examines chain carefully, and then shows his finger to* VIDAL.)

BERGUEDAN

I'll risk this ring — 't would buy two chains like yours.
I would be fair with you. 'T is only just.
The ladies love not little men.

VIDAL

I'm weary of your "little men";
I'll kill you if you use the words again.

CLARA

Fight not for her.
Little or big, she will not notice you.

VIDAL

And why, forsooth? Others have smiled on me.
Maids, wives, and widows have I taught to love.

BERGUEDAN

I am a master in blind Cupid's school.
I'll lesson her.

CLARA

She hath a younger troubadour,
His voice is honey and his face a dream.
A whit too much the saint he is for me,
But suits fair Seremonda passing well: —
Although she is no saint she favours him.
She'll never smile on you with Guilhem near.

BERGUEDAN

And if I please her not, what do I care?
I'll tell some story with a hidden twist
To make her doubt her Guilhem's steadfastness;
I love to mock at love.

CLARA

She would not listen. Do you joy in lies?

VIDAL

When but a little lad my fondest game
Was to entangle the bright skeins of yarn
With which the tire-maids wrought the tapestry.
And now I love to intertwine Life's skein,
To see the puzzled fingers as they grope
Amid the threads, mixed in a hopeless snarl.

If not the lover's, then the tangler's part
I play — I care not which.

CLARA

A meddler and a mocker! which is worse!
(GUIDA *emerges from church*)
This is the Lady Guida; she is fair,
And good, and kind, and walks a path discreet.
Older than Seremonda by three years,
She guards her sister like a little child
Whose heart is wilful and whose footsteps stray.

BERGUEDAN

Her hair is like a shadow of the night,
Her face is fair, her eyes are beautiful —
And yet she is too cold to suit my taste.

CLARA

She's much too good for you.
(ERMENGARDA *enters from church*)
The lady Ermengarda follows her;
Grand-aunt to Raimon is she — and a cat.

VIDAL

An aged tabby. Though her eyes are dim,
Her claws are curved and sharp.

CLARA

Nought 'scapes her. Eyes and claws alike are keen.

(ERMENGARDA *puts hand on* GUIDA'S *shoulder and they descend steps.*)

ERMENGARDA

I'd wait for Seremonda, — not so fast.

GUIDA

She needs us not with Guilhem by her side.

ERMENGARDA

She wants us not, you mean.

GUIDA

She neither needs nor wants us; let us go.
They'll pass us e'er we reach the castle gate.

ERMENGARDA

I like to keep my eyes upon the pair.

GUIDA

They need no watching. Let them follow us:
The maids are idling in the kitchen now.

ERMENGARDA

The lazy drabs! I'll beat them with this crutch.

(ERMENGARDA *brandishes crutch.* GUIDA *and* ERMENGARDA *exit down street at right.*)

(*Enter* SEREMONDA *and* GUILHEM *from church*)

CLARA

That's Seremonda — Guilhem by her side.

BERGUEDAN

Ah! She's no maid of ice.
The very wind grows warm for love of her.

VIDAL

Blonde Helen is she of wide Languedoc.
I'd risk my head to win her smile.

(GUILHEM *gives his hand with great devotion.* SEREMONDA *pauses at the top step and, bending over, whispers into* GUILHEM'S *ear, pointing down road at* ERMENGARDA. GUILHEM *smiles up at her.*)

GUILHEM

We'll take the forest path, and fool your aunt.

SEREMONDA

'T is twice as far.

GUILHEM

No path is long when you are by my side.

SEREMONDA

If you will gather asphodel for me,
And play that we are peasant man and maid,
I'll go with you — the longer way.

(BERGUEDAN *shakes the dust from his shoulder,* VIDAL *pulls down the lace at his sleeve, and both saunter out of the arbour into the street. Neither* SEREMONDA *nor* GUILHEM *notices them at all.* VIDAL *and* BERGUEDAN *follow down the street.* CLARA *turns to the table with a derisive gesture, wipes it, and takes the empty stoup into the inn. Exit* GUILHEM *and* SEREMONDA.)

AUDIART

Well, brother juggler, 't is a lucky day.
I hope Dame Fortune smiles on you.

AMFOS

Dame Fortune is a jade, a scurvy jade.

AUDIART

The more fool you to rail at her.
How is your master? Does he feed you well?

AMFOS

Indifferent well.
He says gaunt Famine stalks where'er I go.

AUDIART

I'd bleed his purse.

AMFOS

He is too sharp for me.
I cannot rob him of a copper coin
But I am caught and beaten to the bone.
I am a juggler, but no slight of hand
Can cozen him. What is your forte?

AUDIART

I am a tumbler, and the little man
I call my master treats me passing well.
He's never angry, and he beats me not

Unless I trim his pointed beard awry.
A single hair will make him furious.
(*He knocks on door and* CLARA *comes to it.* AUDIART *points at* AMFOS.)
This gentleman desires a stoup of wine.

AMFOS

I did not say I'd pay for wine.

AUDIART

You've drank the half of mine.

AMFOS

Yours was half gone before it touched my lips.

CLARA
(*Scornfully*)

Well, is it yes or no? I have my work,
I cannot linger here.

AUDIART

You did not hasten when my master held
His little arm like this. (*Arching his arm.*)
(CLARA *cuffs* AUDIART, *who rolls over and comes up on his feet with a handspring, laughing mockingly.*)

CLARA

Your masters were but little to my taste,
The men are not at all. Well, will you drink?

AMFOS

We'll have a stoup of wine inside the house.
That black cloud threatens rain.

(*The day grows darker.* CLARA *enters inn followed by* AUDIART *and* AMFOS. *Enter* RAIMON *and* BARRAL *from street, left. They are both armed and white with dust. Removing his helmet,* RAIMON *falls on his knees before the shrine, bows his head, crosses himself, and prays.* AIMAR *comes through the church door, followed by a little acolyte. He slowly descends the church steps, comes to* RAIMON'S *side and puts his hand on* RAIMON'S *shoulder. The latter looks up and says:*)

RAIMON

Bless me, good Father.

(AIMAR *recognizes* RAIMON *and staggers back pale with fear and astonishment.*)

AIMAR

Raimon of Roussillon!

RAIMON

Bless me, good Father Aimar.

AIMAR

Your penance is complete?

RAIMON

To the last act. Within the Jordan's waves,
I washed myself white as the spotless snow.

AIMAR

The absolution of the Church is yours?

RAIMON

My sin is expiate, my heart is clean.
The evil from my soul is swept away.
(AIMAR *blesses him and* RAIMON *rises to his feet.*)

AIMAR

The Scripture tells of one whose heart was purged,
But nowhere could the banished demon find

A place to rest. So back he came, again,
And with him seven evil spirits more,
To dwell within the swept and garnished soul.

RAIMON

Truly, good Father, I would keep from sin.

AIMAR

My son, I know how riotous is your blood:
'T is like your wine, too full of liquid fire!
Cease not to pray.

RAIMON

(*With a gesture of impatience*)

I'm not a priest, good father, nor a monk.
I've given two long years out of my life
To pay the forfeit of a moment's sin.

AIMAR

You killed a man upon the altar steps;
The curse of Holy Church was on your soul.
A full month lived you excommunicate
Before you made submission.

Raimon
(*Shrugging his shoulders*)

The Counts of Roussillon have stubborn backs.
My knees were stiff and bent not easily,
Yet they did bend with many a creak and groan.

Aimar

You bowed before the mandate of the Church,
And went a pilgrim to the Holy Land.

Raimon

Yet more — I fought, a soldier of the Cross.
I was a captive, face to face with Death.
This paid my reckoning with a liberal hand.
Well now, good father Aimar, — mark me well, —
I've drunk the dregs out of a bitter cup,
I crave a few drops of the "joy of life."

Aimar

I do not grudge them, yet beware of sin.
Upon your brow you bear the mark of Cain,
And still within your breast you hold the wife
For whom you dared the wrath of Heaven.

RAIMON

She was well worth the risk. Tell me of her.
I'm thirsty for the wine of her red lips.
Is Seremonda safe and well?

AIMAR

Well is she. See that through your love for her
You do not sin again.
(*Looking on* BARRAL)
Who is this man
That stands so still and silent here?

RAIMON

His name is Barral and he is my squire.
He fought with me at black Tiberias,
And, taken captive, from his mouth they tore
His quivering tongue, and left him dumb and mute.

AIMAR
(*To* BARRAL)

God will reward you for all suffering.
And give you perfect speech in Heaven.

RAIMON

He's brave and faithful and I like him well,
Almost as much as Guilhem. Has the lad
Grown tall and strong?

AIMAR

Tall is he, strong and good,
And he has won his spurs for knightly deeds.
He can be trusted, and he holds himself
With the strong bridle of the law of God.
Pray the good saints for power to restrain
Your passion that so long has run at will.

RAIMON

'T would be a test of prayer — and of the saints.

AIMAR

Trust in their power.
Now must I leave you, for the pious soul
Of an old peasant waits, that my poor hand
May help him on the road to Paradise.
I wish, my lord, I wish I were as sure
Your swept and garnished soul could climb to heaven.

(*Exit* AIMAR *with acolyte down street, left.*

RAIMON *watches* AIMAR *until he disappears, then draws a long breath, stretches his arms, and looks up to the sky. His whole bearing changes.*)

RAIMON

Thank God, good Barral, I am home again.
There is no air like that of Roussillon.
No black sheep are there like its ebon flock.
Its red wine is the best in all the world,
As I will prove if you but follow me.

(*They cross over, enter arbour, and seat themselves at a table facing each other.*)

Long years ago a Count of Roussillon
Buried his enemy within a field,
And o'er his body planted a young vine.
This flourished like the gourd of Araby,
And bore great clusters of a ruddy grape,
Which, crushed within the vat, became a wine
So rich, its like was not in Languedoc.
The simple peasants say there lingers still
A drop of angry blood in every cup.

(BARRAL *makes sign of unbelief.*)

I know not whether it be true or false,
But we of Roussillon are violent,

And many lusty sinners lie at rest
Upon their hard beds in the little church
With coverlets of stone upon their breasts.
There is a drop of blood in every cup:
I wonder can we taste it, you and I.

(RAIMON *pounds on table and calls out.*)

Here, old Peire, you sluggard! Wake, I say,
And do not stop to yawn and rub your eyes,
But bring two giant flagons of red wine.

(*First* CLARA *looks out, and shrinks back with a scream. Then* PEIRE *comes to door, blinking at the light, evidently just awakened. He is a mass of flesh. He gazes stupidly at* RAIMON. RAIMON *laughs heartily.*)

RAIMON

(*To* BARRAL)

He once was called our sturdiest man at arms.

(*To* PEIRE)

Come, good Peire, I'll prove I am no ghost;
Bring to me here a stoup of wine.

PEIRE

God bless us, master! You are safe and sound?

RAIMON

I'm safe — but, by Saint Bacchus, thirsty too.
Bring us two stoups, another for yourself,
Or send out Clara and I'll kiss the maid.
She'll tell you if my lips are cold with death.

(PEIRE *comes slowly, his fat face wreathed in smiles.* CLARA *follows with three flagons of wine which she places on table.* RAIMON *takes her on his knee and kisses her. She pulls away, blushing and smiling, and runs toward the house. At the door she turns and says:*)

CLARA

'T was not a dead man's kiss.

RAIMON

You hear what Clara says? Now, good Peire,
I'll give another proof I am no ghost.

(*He drinks the whole flagon without a stop.* BARRAL *drinks also.* BARRAL *makes a gesture of delight.*)

There's not its like this side of Paradise.
Come, Clara, quick, three flagons more.

(CLARA *brings full flagons.*)

To-day no one can pay for wine but me.
It shall be free to every passer by.

PEIRE

'T will cost you dearly, for this is the morn
When all the village dances in the square.
There'll be a crowd of them before this door,
Each with a husky throat, thirsty for wine.

RAIMON

They're all my guests, come they from far or near.

(BERGUEDAN *and* VIDAL *approach slowly from street at right of church.*)

PEIRE

My lord, we've mourned you as one dead.
They said your head was cleft in twain.

RAIMON

So was it had my skull not been too thick.

(PEIRE *examines* RAIMON'S *wound.*)

PEIRE

They nearly had you. 'T was a vicious blow.

RAIMON
(*Mockingly*)

'T is like the mark of Cain upon my brow. —
You, Barral, heard what Aimar said to me —
The scimitar's curved edge cuts not so deep
As a straight sword-blade in a heavy hand.
(RAIMON *draws sword from belt.*)
I wielded this until my nerveless arm
Hung by my side. I could not lift it more.

PEIRE

There is no better sword in Languedoc.

RAIMON

A day and night I lay upon the field
And only came to life when in my face
A greedy vulture stabbed his eager beak.
I scarce had strength to beat the foul bird off.
Then I was captive till good Barral here
Helped me to 'scape to Acre, where we found
A ship that brought us home at last.

PEIRE

The saints be praised!

(*Enter* BERGUEDAN *and* VIDAL)

BERGUEDAN

And sinners too.

VIDAL

And love and song and wine.

BERGUEDAN

We'll drink to love and song.

PEIRE

This is Count Raimon, whom we mourned as dead.

BERGUEDAN

(*Greatly astonished*)

The Count of Roussillon!

RAIMON

Who bids the whole world be his guest to-day.
You are the first to drink with me.

VIDAL

Right gladly will I — your good health (*drinks*).
And if you have a lady young and fair
I'll sing her praises in your hall to-night.

BERGUEDAN

One voice is not enough to glorify
A lovely woman. She shall hear me too.

RAIMON

You both shall sing.
I'll bring you to my castle, where your eyes
Shall see the fairest lady 'neath the sun.
Sweet is she as the blooming asphodel,
For which the merry peasants seek to-day. —
(*Rising with his hand to his ear*)
Listen, I think I hear them singing now.

(*Song, first faint, grows louder until youths and maidens enter from street at right of church, followed by villagers. The king and queen of the dancers come to the front of the stage. The king is very old and feeble with a tinsel crown on his head. The queen is young and beautiful. She also has a crown. There are eight others in the dance, four men and four maids.*)

RAIMON

That is chill Winter, he who wears the crown,

He's called the jealous husband, and his queen
Deserts him for the warm embrace of Spring.

(*The eight young peasants join hands and dance around the king and queen. Then they form in line and, passing between the king and queen, the men dance in a circle around the king and the maids around the queen. The king tries to break through the circle, and at last succeeds, but cannot reach his queen, as the maids will not unclasp their hands.*)

SONG

Now the days are bright and clear, heigho!
Winter's gone, the Spring is here, heigho!
And our young queen need not fear, heigho!
To show her lord, with frown austere,
What lusty lad she fancies. —

Chorus

Join our dance, pretty queen of the May:
Join our dance, with us play.
Go away, jealous man, go away!

Youths have come from far and near, heigho!
Here's a shepherd without peer, heigho!

Take him if you find him dear, heigho!
Be a gallant mutineer,
Veil not your amorous glances. — *Chorus.*

See him try to domineer, heigho!
See him frown and see him sneer, heigho!
He's an old man bald and blear, heigho!
He's too ugly to appear
With her whose grace entrances. — *Chorus.*

Here's a youth who all the year, heigho!
Tends the vines. Well made to cheer, heigho!
Warm his heart, his love sincere, heigho!
Call him if you wish him near;
He like a feather dances. — *Chorus.*

(*At the close of the song the dancers form two lines headed by the king and queen. The king and the four young men fall on their knees in an attitude of appeal. The queen is about to choose her lover and throw herself in the arms of the vine-dresser when* RAIMON *springs forward and seizes her. She screams, the peasants are startled, and huddle together with exclamations of fear and astonishment.* PEIRE *comes forward and says:*)

PEIRE

It is our good lord safe and well,
Who bids you all to eat and drink your fill.
And he who sober seeks his bed to-night
Must fear the stern displeasure of his lord.

(CLARA *comes out of the front door of the inn and, unnoticed, runs up the street toward the castle.*)

RAIMON

Well said! My good Peire, may you, and I,
And all the world young-hearted be to-day.
The joy of life to all!

CURTAIN

Act I. Scene II.

Great Hall of Raimon's *castle. Fireplace, left centre. A doorway back of fireplace. Two narrow window-slits in right wall, and between these windows a door. At back of room is window with perpendicular iron bar. This window is raised two steps from floor and has a stone seat around it. Walls are hung with armour and weapons of war and chase. There are receptacles for torches. At the back centre is a long table. The room is glowing with light streaming through the long window.* Guida *and* Ermengarda *enter through right door, dressed as at church.*

Ermengarda

They passed us not. You are foresworn.
A snail had passed us at the pace we came.

Guida

How does it matter? What is fretting you?

ERMENGARDA

They're like two mating doves upon a tower.

GUIDA

The tower is good. They've nothing to conceal.
A year ago we heard Raimon was dead;
A week it is since Gui of Carcassone
Returned from Palestine and told us that
He saw the count stretched on the fatal field,
Cleft through the head. What would you more
than this?
Should Seremonda shut herself within a tomb?
She is too young. The love she gave her lord
Was forced from her.

ERMENGARDA

She did not love her lord.

GUIDA

What does it matter now the man is dead?

(*Enter* SEREMONDA *and* GUILHEM)

ERMENGARDA

Where have you been?

SEREMONDA

We took the forest path. Why do you ask?
Why should I answer you?

GUIDA

Come, aunt, I'll to my tapestry
'T is time you saw the maids about their work.

(*Exit* GUIDA *and* ERMENGARDA, *the latter grumbling and looking over her shoulder.* ADELE *enters from door, left rear, and removes* SEREMONDA'S *mantle, retiring same door as entrance.* SEREMONDA *goes to a polished shield on wall, which she uses for a mirror.* GUILHEM *watches her admiringly.* SEREMONDA *turns to him with a smile.*)

SEREMONDA

The day is good, and scarce an hour is spent.

GUILHEM

Only one coin gone from our bag of gold.

SEREMONDA

Gold hath no value if it be not spent.

Guilhem

And yet,
I'd like a miser treasure all the hours,
And watch them glisten as they slowly slip
Between my loving fingers, one by one.

Seremonda

I'd be a spendthrift with the day
And buy full value of the "joy of life."
(Seremonda *goes to window and stands looking out.*)

Guilhem

The sunlight makes a halo of your hair.

Seremonda
(*Laughing*)

I am no saint.

Guilhem

Tell me, my lady, whither flies your wish?

Seremonda

Think you my heart has wings?

GUILHEM

All hearts have wings, yet some from flight are held
By hateful bars they cannot hope to break.

SEREMONDA

And some are blind like hooded hawks, who cling
Fast to the falconer's glove.

GUILHEM

The falcon hates the hood, yet he must wait
Until 't is lifted from his blinded eyes.

SEREMONDA

Yet all birds are not falcons, strong of wing;
Some birds there be who, like the nightingale,
Are only fit for song.

GUILHEM

And others, like the lark, both sing and fly,
Forever striving toward a distant heaven
They cannot reach.

SEREMONDA

(*Looking into* GUILHEM'S *eyes with a smile*)
And yet, some heavens are not too far away.
(GUILHEM *steps toward her with outstretched hand, but she apparently does not notice him as she takes seat and looks out of window.*)
I have no wish this morning but to sit
Here, in this window, and to feel the breeze,
Fresh from the waves, play with my hair.

GUILHEM

The wind is happy; would I were the wind.
(SEREMONDA *looks at him mockingly.*)

SEREMONDA

You are a faint wind, from the dreamy South, —
A lark who flutters toward a distant heaven, —
A hooded falcon, held in the demure, —
A nightingale, his breast against a thorn,
Though why he hurts himself no one can tell.
(GUILHEM *starts to speak, but she lifts a warning hand.*)
The last suits best and you may sing to me.

GUILHEM

I hope I am at least a lark who mounts
On valiant wings to heaven. What shall I sing?

SEREMONDA

I care not, just a verse or two, no more, —
I love the hawk more than the simple lark, —
A hawk, clear-eyed, unhooded, strong of wing.

GUILHEM

There is a new song that young Arnaut sings
In praise of Alazais. I am not sure
I have each word, and of the melody
There is, alas, no single note I know.
One line is beautiful beyond compare,
And all night long it whispered in my ears.
(GUILHEM *recites the lines.*)

SONG

We three, my lady, you and I — and Love, —
We only know the secret of a treasure
Which blue-eyed Hope alone may weigh and measure.
There's not its like in blissful heaven above.
I'll breathe the secret that we know so well —
My heart is yours — yours mine, and I confess

I care no other treasure to possess.
Heaven hath no charms while here on earth we dwell, —
We three, my lady, you and I— and Love.

(*When* GUILHEM *finishes*, SEREMONDA *turns to him, her face aflame with love.*)

SEREMONDA

Guilhem!

GUILHEM

My queen.
(GUILHEM *falls on his knees and kisses* SEREMONDA'S *hand.*)

SEREMONDA
(*Lifting* GUILHEM)

A dog may kiss my hand.
(GUILHEM *kisses* SEREMONDA'S *cheek.*)

SEREMONDA

My cheek is free to every noble guest.
(GUILHEM *seizes her in his arms and kisses her on the lips passionately.*)

SEREMONDA

You are no longer blind?

GUILHEM

At last I look undazzled at the sun.

SEREMONDA

You cannot touch and taste a distant sun.
(GUILHEM *kisses her again.*)

GUILHEM

I've longed for this sweet draught
As one, dying of thirst, who sees a spring
Beneath tall palm trees waving o'er the sands.

SEREMONDA

You might have drunk a weary year ago —
The spring was here and free to take.

GUILHEM
(*Trembling*)

There's more than water in that draught.

SEREMONDA

It stirs your pulse? Sometimes I've had the fear
That in your veins there was no ardent blood.

GUILHEM

I thought of my good lord,
My oath of loyalty. That was the cage
Through whose strong bars I could not break.

(GUILHEM *leaves the window and paces up and down before the fireplace.* SEREMONDA *follows him and puts her hand on his arm.*)

SEREMONDA

Your master and my wicked lord was dead,
And we were free. My heart was thirsty, too;
My lips were parched with longing for your kiss.

GUILHEM

We had sure news but one short week ago.
I prayed that he might live.

SEREMONDA

I wished him dead.
He stole me from the blood-besprinkled church,
And robbery can give no valid right.

GUILHEM

Yet he was good to me.
And e'en I think he loved you too.

SEREMONDA

He loved red wine as well.
He loved his sword, his armour and his dog.
I might have stood the equal of them all
But the black charger that he rode to war.

(*There is the sound of a distant trumpet.* GUILHEM *and* SEREMONDA *go to window, right front.*)

GUILHEM

Who think you summons us?

SEREMONDA

'T is far away. 'T is naught.

GUILHEM

Only the horn of Death can frighten us.
We must be fair to Raimon who has heard
The fatal trumpet. May he rest in peace.

SEREMONDA

I hope he suffers rightly for his sins.

GUILHEM

He like an elder brother was to me,
And in the forest once he saved my life:

I'd fallen and was faint and weaponless,
The boar's sharp tusks a hand-breadth from my side.

SEREMONDA

Had Raimon been as close to me as you,
He'd clasped me in his arms a year ago.

(SEREMONDA *returns to seat at window.* GUILHEM *makes gesture of appeal, and falls on his knees before her.* SEREMONDA *relents and caresses his hair with her hand.*)

SEREMONDA

Forgive me, Guilhem; hate me not.
I love you none the less because my heart
Hath little honor in it — nought but love.
Kiss me again.

(*They embrace and kiss.*)

GUILHEM

'T is like a fabled fountain of the East,
And he who drinks must ever thirst for more.

SEREMONDA

We've come a long and weary road to reach
This heaven at last. You must be good to me,

My Guilhem. For until this blesséd hour,
I've had but glimpses of the joy of life.
Tell me when first love blossomed in your heart?

GUILHEM

I always loved you — as the lark the sky.
When Raimon told me ere he went away
My service was to be on you alone,
I asked no more of heaven.

SEREMONDA

But when changed love to passion — Tell me that.

GUILHEM

Do you remember that soft night in June,
When we together in this window sat,
And watched the moon float through the yielding clouds?

SEREMONDA

Never shall I forget.

GUILHEM

You asked me, "If a lady gave to you
Glances of love, would you dare answer them?"

SEREMONDA

And you said, "Yes, if I were only sure
Her looks had truly shown her heart."

GUILHEM

And then you gazed at me until I saw
The moon no more, but only your blue eyes.
And when you smiled and whispered, "Tell me now,
Is this glance true or false?" I answered then,
"May all things be as please you best."
(*The trumpet sounds nearer, and* GUILHEM *goes to window.*)
A moment sooner — I had seen them pass.
Now they are hidden by the winding road.

SEREMONDA

What care we who they are? It matters not.
(GUILHEM *returns and embraces* SEREMONDA.)

GUILHEM

Nought matters when I hold you in my arms.

SEREMONDA

'T is good to be alive to-day;
And yet I never in this window sit
But to my heart there comes the chill of death.
(*Looks out.*)
See how that blue wave breaks upon the rock,
And leaves a smother of white foam behind.
How soft it looks!

GUILHEM

'T is soft and pitiless.
But why comes to you here the chill of death?

SEREMONDA

When Raimon brought me home I was distraught,
And tried to throw myself upon the waves.

GUILHEM

You could not pass between the bars.

SEREMONDA

I had passed through them when he caught my arm
I think I could again.
(SEREMONDA *climbs swiftly to the window,*

and, passing out, stands smiling through the bars at GUILHEM. GUILHEM *springs up and seizes her.*)

GUILHEM

For God's sake, have a care!

(SEREMONDA *returns laughing.* GUILHEM *holds her in his arms.*)

You must not play with Death. You're not your own.

SEREMONDA

If I am yours, my master, tell me this: —
What will you do with me?

GUILHEM

I'll take you to the priest to-morrow morn.
We shall be wedded ere the sun is high.
We'll gallop to my castle in the fields, —
My little castle with the lilied moat, —
And there I think you'll find the joy of life.

SEREMONDA

The joy of life!

GUILHEM

And many happy years we there shall dwell.
We three, my lady, you and I — and Love.
(GUIDA *rushes in pale and breathless.*)

GUIDA

Count Raimon lives!
(GUILHEM *and* SEREMONDA *come forward hand in hand.*)

GUILHEM

Good God! He is not dead?

SEREMONDA
(*Fiercely*)

Who says he lives?

GUIDA

'T was Clara brought the word.
He's in the village drinking at the inn.
Listen! There goes the trumpet at the gate.
One moment and he's here. What shall we do?

SEREMONDA

We'll kill him as he climbs the stair.

GUIDA

You are distraught; you know not what you say.

GUILHEM

O God! what shall we do?

GUIDA

Unclasp your hands. Here, Seremonda, stand
Where you can greet him at his entering.
I'll place myself between you.
(SEREMONDA *pushes* GUIDA *away*.)

SEREMONDA

Not you, not Raimon, not a soul shall stand
Between myself and Guilhem.
(GUIDA *makes an appealing gesture, and leads* SEREMONDA *aside*.)

GUIDA

Are you in love with Death?
(*To* GUILHEM)
You must pretend your heart is fixed on me.
Fear not to swear it in necessity.

GUILHEM

And would you mock at love?

GUIDA

I'd mock at heaven in a time like this.

(*Enter* RAIMON, *folllowed by* BARRAL *and* BERGUEDAN. GUILHEM *throws himself at* RAIMON'S *feet.*)

GUILHEM

My lord!

(RAIMON *touches* GUILHEM *on the head.*)

RAIMON

'T is good to see thee, lad.

(RAIMON *turns to* SEREMONDA, *who screams and falls into* GUIDA'S *arms. The latter smiles wanly and says:*)

GUIDA

'T is but a faint. She took you for a ghost.
She's overjoyed at your return.

(RAIMON *rushes to help* GUIDA. VIDAL *and*

BARRAL *look wonderingly from one to another.* BERGUEDAN *stands near door with cynical smile.*)

RAIMON

Some cordial, quick! How beautiful she is!

CURTAIN

Act II

Act II. Scene I.

Early morning of the second day. A thick forest with an opening, in the centre of which is a huge oak. A narrow path, left, rear. There is a spring at the left of the tree, near its roots. Into it Vidal *is looking earnestly. He is on his hands and knees. After admiring himself he smiles, ogles, frowns, appears now haughty, now entreating, as he practices various expressions which may be useful to him.* Berguedan *appears in path, and, catching sight of* Vidal, *watches him with great amusement. At a particularly languishing expression,* Berguedan *bursts into loud laughter, and comes forward.*

Berguedan

Narcissus at the fountain, by the mass.

Vidal

I but glanced in the brook to see my beard;
'T was vilely trimmed this morning, quite awry.

BERGUEDAN

Had I your silly beard, I'd cut it off;
Had I your foolish face, I'm sure I'd break
My mirror, and I would not gaze in brooks.
A murrain on the day! Look at my sleeve.

VIDAL

'T is splashed with blood, and here's an awful
rent.

BERGUEDAN

A boar's tusk did it, and my skin
'Scaped by a hair's breadth.

VIDAL

I'd hunt a safer quarry than the boar.
My Lady Guida in the garden sits.
I'll back to her. She is my game.

BERGUEDAN

What deadly peril is the fair maid in!
You should have mercy on her helplessness.
Watched you her face last night?

VIDAL

She did not like your songs.

BERGUEDAN

Nor did she smile at you.

VIDAL

You did not see the glance she gave to me.

BERGUEDAN

I saw her yawn behind her friendly fan
When you were singing to her tenderly.

VIDAL

She yawned not when I climbed to higher C.

BERGUEDAN

Climbed, say you, climbed? You tripped and fell,
You were a half-note flat.

VIDAL

You lie. I was not flat.
I'll wager my gold chain—

BERGUEDAN

It is not yours to wager. Give it me.
Good brother troubadour, the chain is mine.
Here's Seremonda's kerchief. You have lost.
She gave the favour as she pressed my hand.

VIDAL

Again you lie. She did not give it you.
I saw you pick it slyly from the floor
Where she had dropped it when she left the room.

BERGUEDAN

Your eyes are bright. No one can cozen you.
Fair Seremonda! What thought you of her?

VIDAL

She did not fancy you, my friend.

BERGUEDAN

What chance had I with you so close at hand?

VIDAL

When I sang my last song, beginning thus, —
"Your lover, my belovéd, I would be,"
She looked at me as she would read my face.

BERGUEDAN
(*Laughing*)

She's not a fool to read a vacant page.

VIDAL

You'll know who is the fool
When on my hand I wear your precious ring.

BERGUEDAN

It is a man's ring. 'T would not fit a boy.
Fair Seremonda did not look at you.

VIDAL

She was not well; for when she sought her bed
She scarce could walk, so faint was she.

BERGUEDAN

She sat, a statue, carved in pulseless stone.
Her soul is rent in twain, one half is full
Of love for Guilhem, and the other half
Is heavy with the loathing of her lord.
For Guilhem only had she eyes and ears.
She did not value us at our true worth.
(*Laughing.*)

VIDAL

Speak for yourself;
I'm sure to wear your ring upon my hand.

BERGUEDAN

Maybe, Narcissus, but i' faith I think
The lady hath too good a taste to choose
The doll-like image of a man like you.
I think that each of us will keep his own
Unless we trip young Guilhem.

VIDAL

In Seremonda's ear I'll breathe a word
Will make her question Guilhem's steadfastness.

BERGUEDAN

She would not listen, silly fool.
I know a way to bring him to the ground.
I'll drop a seed in Raimon's jealous breast
Which will grow faster than his famous vine.
Go back and pose for Guida, 'midst the flowers.
I'll see the Count alone. He comes here now.

(*Exit* VIDAL. *Enter* RAIMON, *followed by* BARRAL. RAIMON'S *costume is disordered*,

he is hot and weary and he carries a boar spear in his hand, the point red. His hands also have blood upon them. He first drinks at the brook and then throws himself on the ground near BERGUEDAN.)

RAIMON

By Saint Michael, I scarce can lift my feet.
I was no hotter when I crossed the sands
And climbed the rocky hills of Palestine.
I wish this spring gushed ruddy wine.

BERGUEDAN

And so do I. Will Guilhem meet us here?

RAIMON

Beneath this tree.

BERGUEDAN

Loves he to hunt the boar as well as you?

RAIMON

No huntsman is there in wide Languedoc
Like Guilhem, and a boar spear in his hand
Is like a flash of lightning from the sky.

BERGUEDAN

I thought him but a singer of sweet songs,
His only weapons glances of the eye
To pierce the samite of a rounded breast.

RAIMON

A troubadour, a huntsman, and a knight,
He is a comrade stanch beyond compare.

BERGUEDAN

Fair ladies would be pleased to comrade him.

RAIMON

He little cares for wine or ladies' smiles.
Saint Anthony was not more chaste than he.

BERGUEDAN

You know him best — and yet two years have passed.
His songs are good.

RAIMON

I liked your first song, but the last I thought
Was better suited to a soldier's camp.

Berguedan

I've sung it in a hundred noble halls.

Raimon

The ladies favoured Guilhem's. Tell me why?
They've heard them oft enough to tire.

Berguedan

Who can explain a fondness or a taste?
You like a rose and I a violet.
Mayhap if I had warbled Guilhem's song,
And he sung mine, then Seremonda's smile
Had been transferred from Guilhem's face to mine.

Raimon

Mayhap.

Berguedan

The smile was more for Guilhem than his song.

Raimon

What!

Berguedan

There is no covert meaning in my words.
Guilhem and Seremonda are no more

Than children, who might kiss within a ring
Of laughing youngsters, with no thought of love,
No hint of passion and no taint of lust.

RAIMON

Yet they in truth are man and woman grown.

BERGUEDAN

But Guilhem is a saint, like Anthony.
You said it only now.

RAIMON

Yes, so I said. —
And Seremonda is a child, you think.

BERGUEDAN

A child in innocence, though in her breast
There burns the quiet flame of wifely love.
Remember Guilhem is a troubadour;
Before his queen of song he bends the knee,
Devotion, not desire, in his heart.

RAIMON

Do they in Aragon?

BERGUEDAN

In Aragon and Languedoc as well.
True, there are recreants. Alas! 't is true.

(BERGUEDAN *rises.*)

RAIMON

Alas! say I as well; and must you go?

BERGUEDAN

Indeed, I must, for I would con a song
That you shall hear to-night. I hope 't will please.

RAIMON

I am no judge of songs.

(*Exit* BERGUEDAN, *right. For a moment they sit in silence; then* RAIMON *looks at* BARRAL.)

What think you of him, Barral?

(BARRAL *makes sinuous motion with his hands.*)

He is a snake?

(BARRAL *nods.*)

What of his words?

(BARRAL *makes motion in front of his mouth with fingers.*)

His tongue is forked? — I' faith, I think you're
right.
And there is deadly venom on it too. —
To hear the names of those I love the best
Coupled so close did violence to my ears. —
In Guilhem do I trust against the world,
Yet he's a creature of warm flesh and blood.
And Seremonda! — 'faith she'd tempt a saint
To leave the joys of Paradise.
(RAIMON *starts up in passion.*)
If I thought that their dewy lips had touched
I'd send them both to hell.
(BARRAL *makes gesture of appeal.* RAIMON
strides up and down stage.)
I see the flame
That cursed my bloodshot eyes two years ago.
Oh ho! Sir Devil, are you back again?
(*Crosses himself.*)
I will remember what good Aimar said
Of him whose soul was garnished and swept
clean.
(*Crosses himself again.*)
Get thee behind me, Satan! May the saints
Preserve my soul and keep my heart from
sin.

(*To* BARRAL)

Go to the priest and bid him pray for me.

(BARRAL *nods, smiles approvingly, and exits.*)

There's something wrong, I know not what or why.
I'm like a ship which, sailing through a mist,
Hears sounds of warning bells, but cannot tell
From whence they come.

(RAIMON *throws himself on grass again.*)

(*Enter* GUILHEM, *back, left*)

Guilhem, sit down beside me.

GUILHEM

You had good sport?
I see your point is freshly painted red.

RAIMON

I killed three boars.

GUILHEM

The same as I.
One a swine royal. You've not lost your skill,

Though two long years have passed since in your hand
You held the spear.

RAIMON

Yes, two long years have passed. We both are changed.
I know not which the more.

GUILHEM

I'm taller by a hand-breadth, but my heart,
Hath changed not, nor my love and loyalty.

RAIMON

How did you come to be a troubadour?
Two years ago your only thought was war,
The tourney, and the chase.

GUILHEM

I cannot tell whence came the gift of song.
No more than can the foolish lark who flies
Up from the meadow towards the arch of blue.
He, floating, sings he knows not why.

RAIMON

Guilhem, so help your God and your good faith,
Have you a lady whom you sing and love?

GUILHEM

How could I sing if love impelled me not?

RAIMON

Who is your lady?

GUILHEM

Alas, my lord, in God's name, ask me not.

RAIMON

Why are you loath to answer me?

GUILHEM

It is not right for me to name my love.
Bernart of Ventadorn has truly said
It is a foolish and a childish thing
To bare the heart to one who cannot help.

RAIMON

Who cannot help!
I promise I will help with all my power —
If she is one you may in honor seek.

GUILHEM

I pray you do not question me, my lord.

RAIMON

You trust me not?

GUILHEM

I trust you with my honor and my life.
It is the first rule of the singer's creed
To keep his lady's name hid in his breast. —
(RAIMON *springs to his feet — catches* GUILHEM *by the throat.*)

RAIMON

To hell with your sly, whining singer's rules.
And you shall follow them — the name, I say.
(*He pushes* GUILHEM *from him, who staggers back and falls.* GUILHEM *rises to his feet and tears open his bliaut at the throat.*)

GUILHEM

I'd rather die than tell the name I love.
You have a boar spear ready in your hand.
Here is your mark.

(RAIMON *poises the spear as if to strike.* GUILHEM *faces him without flinching.* RAIMON *lets the point of the spear fall to the ground.*)

RAIMON

And be forever mocked by silent lips?
I bid you by your oath of loyalty,
The sacred pledge you gave me as my squire,
Tell me the name.

(GUILHEM *makes appealing gesture, but* RAIMON *is obdurate.*)

GUILHEM

Only at your command I speak, my lord.
'T is gentle Guida that I love.

RAIMON

Guida! I wish you joy with all my heart.
A thousand joys I pray may bless you both.

I'm sure she loves you. Have you kissed her
yet?
What can I do to aid you? Tell me what.

GUILHEM

I fear 't would startle her if I too soon
Should speak of love. 'T is best to wait.

RAIMON

I tell you try assault, not lengthened siege.
Take here my hand and with it take my oath.
I swear to help you all within my power.
Let us go now and seek her.

GUILHEM

My good lord, let me go alone.

RAIMON

I'll be your herald, I will act
As messenger to warn how strong the force
Encamped against the gateway of her heart.
She will surrender, that I promise you.

GUILHEM

Wait till to-morrow, good my lord.

RAIMON

I say to-day. What cowards lovers be!

(RAIMON *takes* GUILHEM *by the arm, and they exit from right.*)

CURTAIN

Act II. Scene II.

The castle garden. Morning of second day. On right is the wall of the tower with postern door deep set in the masonry. On the left are shrubs with a path, front. At the back is a low wall, and beyond, the water of the Mediterranean with sails upon it. The garden is full of roses and at the rear is a stone house, open front and back, with red-tiled roof. Here Guida *is seated before a small tapestry frame and by her side is a basket of many-coloured worsteds. She faces toward the left, and at rear, and a little in front of her, is* Ermengarda.

Ermengarda

'T is near mid-morning, for the dew is gone,
And Lady Seremonda still abed.

Guida

She rose an hour ago.

ERMENGARDA

And slept she well?

GUIDA

She scarcely slept at all, but by my side
She lay all night tossing as if distraught.
To see one, mourned a long twelvemonth as dead,
Appear as if arisen from the grave,
Affrighted her so greatly that I feared
The shock would end in madness, or in death.

ERMENGARDA

Joy does not kill — nor e'en to madness drive.

GUIDA

It does not, she is better now.

ERMENGARDA

And filled with joy to see her lord again?

GUIDA

My sister Seremonda was not won
By pretty courtesies to melt the heart.
She was not wooed at all, but wed by force.

ERMENGARDA

Yet did she make her vow. She's Raimon's wife.

GUIDA

You're right. She had a choice. 'T was Raimon's wife,
Or to be called another name less sweet:
Her joy is tempered by these memories.

ERMENGARDA

Tempered by memories! and by hopes as well,
Which have been blasted by a sudden frost.
My eyes are old, but not too blind to see.

GUIDA

My sister to her lord is leal and true.
She'll give him all the love that he deserves,
If he be patient with her now.

ERMENGARDA

Patience! I know a quicker cure than that,
And were I Raimon I would give it her.

(*Enter* VIDAL, *who struts to and fro across the garden, front*)

GUIDA

Raimon will do no wrong,
Unless into his ear some meddler pours
The subtle poison of a slanderous tongue: —
What think you of the little troubadour?

ERMENGARDA

(*Scornfully*)

He is a peacock. If he had a tail
How proud he'd be to spread it in the sun.

GUIDA

He's harmless, quite.

ERMENGARDA

I'm not so sure of that.
Heard you how he was treated in Saint Gilles?

GUIDA

Tell me the tale.

ERMENGARDA

He boasted of a lady's love for him
And told of favours granted without stint;
The husband heard of it and slit his tongue.

GUIDA

He was well served.

(ERMENGARDA *rises with difficulty.*)

ERMENGARDA

Well, I must see the maids are at their work. —
(*Turning on* GUIDA *and shaking her finger at her.*)
I know not what you mean by "slanderous tongue";
But tell you this, my Lady Circumspect,
That there is one whose lips cannot be sealed.
One who keeps silent while she is in doubt,
But will not fear to tell the proven truth.
(*Exit* ERMENGARDA *with a look of defiance at* GUIDA. VIDAL *approaches* GUIDA, *who occupies herself with her work.*)

VIDAL

Working so patiently here in the sun!
I fear you'll spoil your eyes, fair demoiselle.

GUIDA
(*Coldly*)

The eyes are mine to mar them if I will.

VIDAL

Better the sun's eclipse than they grow dim.
And may I see the picture that you weave
With your white fingers?

GUIDA

You have the fairer side.

VIDAL

With the loose worsteds dangling all awry?

GUIDA

It is the fairer side.
(VIDAL *looks over* GUIDA'S *shoulder.*)

VIDAL

Indeed, you wrong your skill. You weave the flight
Into far Egypt of the Holy Child.

GUIDA

Because you see the flapping ears so plain?
It may be Christ entering Jerusalem —
Or Balaam and his ass.

VIDAL

(*Reproachfully*)

You are unkind.

(*Enter* BERGUEDAN)

BERGUEDAN

I pray you, lady, be not harsh to him.
He has a poet's soul; an unkind word
Will hurt him more than would a blow
A man of sterner stuff.

GUIDA

And some there be who have such callous skins
They need an oaken cudgel. Chiding words
Are wasted on a donkey's hide.

VIDAL

Thank you, my lady. He but tells the truth.
I fear your frown more than a blow from him.

I hope to win a smile from you to-night.
I have a song I've written in your praise
Which I would finish carefully.
I shall despair unless it please you well.

(VIDAL *bows with great deference again and again on taking his departure, and* BERGUEDAN *moves the basket of worsteds so that* VIDAL *trips over it and nearly falls.*)

VIDAL

What have I done?

GUIDA

You've mixed my worsteds. It will take an hour
To sort the tangled threads.

BERGUEDAN

Faith! You are clumsy for a carpet knight.

VIDAL

Alas! what dreadful havoc have I wrought!
Of all things do I hate to tangle threads.
The peasants say it is a sign of woe —

The omen holds not good to one so fair,
So virtuous and discreet.

(VIDAL *exits through the little door at right.* BERGUEDAN *helps* GUIDA *sort the tangled worsteds.* RAIMON *and* GUILHEM *appear in path, left, front.* RAIMON *leaves* GUILHEM *and approaches* GUIDA *and* BERGUEDAN, *who look up at sound of his feet.*)

RAIMON
(*To* BERGUEDAN)

Your sleeve is stained with blood,
You should go wash it ere it dries.

(BERGUEDAN *rises at* RAIMON'S *hint.*)

BERGUEDAN

Forgive me, lady. Though I 'scaped the boar
I have a wound no medicine can heal.

(BERGUEDAN *bows, his hand on his heart, and exits through postern door.*)

GUIDA

What make you of this man of Aragon?
I think he is a snake.

RAIMON

Why, so says Barral too. To-morrow night
The Spaniard spends with us, then takes his leave.
Let us forget him, for the day is good.

GUIDA

No day is good when he is in our sight.

RAIMON

He's gone. We'll talk of pleasanter things. —
Sweet sister, such a pretty maid as you
Must have a lover — mayhap two — or three.

GUIDA

One lover is enough for virtuous maids.

RAIMON

And how far has advanced this happy youth?
Has pressed your hand? Has kissed your fragrant lips?

GUIDA

He's breathed no word of love to me.

RAIMON

'T is only glances, then. The sails are spread,
Yet you've not passed outside the harbour mouth.
I' faith, you need a sturdy helping oar,
Or you will never reach the port of love.
Tell me his name?

GUIDA

I will not.

RAIMON

I'll throw these worsteds in the sea.

GUIDA

Throw them. I will not tell.

RAIMON

If I should guess his name, will you confess?

GUIDA

Perhaps.

RAIMON

'T is Guilhem, then.

GUIDA

Perhaps.

RAIMON

The poor lad waits
Behind the hawthorn. I'll go fetch him here.

GUIDA

You shall not. I should die of shame.
(GUIDA *covers her face with her hands.*)

RAIMON

I'll send him to you with a gentle hint, —
The faintest hint that you'll not prove unkind.
(RAIMON *joins* GUILHEM *behind the hawthorn, pats him on the back, and* GUILHEM *crosses the garden to* GUIDA.)

GUIDA
(*Whispers*)

What's in the air?

GUILHEM
(*Whispers*)

I think a shadow of the wing of Death.

GUIDA
(*Whispers*)

Has Raimon grown suspicious? Tell me quick!

GUILHEM
(*Whispers*)

He's driven me to such desperate straits
That I was forced to say 't was you I loved.
Remember, so you bade me yesterday.
The lie came not too glibly from my throat.

GUIDA
(*Whispers*)

There was no other way.
And we must play our parts. Take here my hand.
Perhaps he watches from the hawthorn hedge.
Down on your knees before me.

(GUILHEM *falls on his knees. At this moment* RAIMON *appears, left, front, with* SERE-MONDA *behind him, to whom he points out* GUILHEM *and* GUIDA; *then exits, laughing happily.* GUIDA *caresses* GUILHEM'S *bowed head, lifts him up, and draws his*

lips down to her. SEREMONDA *crosses garden and stands before them, too angry to speak.*)

GUIDA

Has Raimon gone?

SEREMONDA

Raimon has gone — but I am here.

GUIDA

He was suspicious. We were forced to act
As if we loved each other. Well you know
Our thought was but for you.

SEREMONDA

'T is very pretty — as if learned by rote.
Yet, good my sweet, I think the part you played
Was not distasteful to you, and his kiss
You drunk right thirstily. Go, get you gone.
Go! ere I strike you. I would speak alone
With this, the other actor in the play.

(*Exit* GUIDA, *silently protesting.*)

SEREMONDA

I know you have no other thought but me. —
I'm not so sure of her. What shall we do?

GUILHEM

What can we do?

SEREMONDA

I care not what if it but set me free.
I cannot bear to live a long deceit.
I cannot bear his kisses on my lips.
I never loved him, and I loathe him now.
Come, take me with you far across the sea,
I care not where, if you are by my side.

GUILHEM

Good God, I cannot! Traitor to my lord
I cannot prove.

SEREMONDA

Give him his chance. Tell the whole truth to him.
Meet him in armour wheresoe'er he choose.

Guilhem

I fear him not,
Though he's a strong man, and with sword and lance
There is no abler knight in Languedoc.

Seremonda

You're quicker far.
He's not the man he was: his sufferings
In Palestine have sapped his youthful strength.
You'd surely kill him, and then you and I
Could gallop to your castle in the fields,
Your little castle with its lilied moat,
And there I know I'd find the joy of life.

Guilhem

We three together — you and I — and Love.

Seremonda

Yes — you and I — and Love.

(Guilhem *takes her in his arms for a moment only.*)

Guilhem

This morning when we hunted the wild boar,
Raimon was wearied in a single hour —

SEREMONDA

I tell you he is just as sure to die,
If he cross swords with you on equal ground,
As if you filled his cup with deadly drug.
And yet you'll have no sin upon your soul.

GUILHEM

"No sin upon my soul!"

SEREMONDA

You meet the man with weapons in his hands.

GUILHEM

He is not strong,
And he has spent his strength in holy war —
(*A long pause.*)
I cannot take advantage of him thus.
Good God! I cannot.

SEREMONDA

And yet you say you love me more than life.
Must I drag through the weary, hopeless years
By Raimon's side, whose very touch I loathe?

Must I look on while you and Guida play
Your charming comedy before my eyes?
This very moment all the castle rings
With news that you and she are bound in love.
The thought of it is gall; the sight was hell.

Guilhem

I pray you spare me.

Seremonda
(*Speaking very slowly*)

Listen to every lightest word I speak: —
To-night when we are gathered in the hall
My praises shall you sing so openly
That Raimon and the whole world shall know
You love me only.

Guilhem

It means my death — perhaps your death as well.

Seremonda

My death! Your death as well!
What care I? Think you life a precious thing?

But yestermorn my cup of bliss was full —
We three together — you and I — and Love.
To-day! O God, why did you let him live! —

(*Exit* SEREMONDA.)

CURTAIN

Act III

Act III. Scene I.

The tiring-room, evening of second day. The room is small, with one narrow window on left. In the corner is a prie-dieu with small crucifix. A large chest at the back with the lid lifted, and garments of different colors scattered about. A dressing-table with a dagger and a jewel-box on it beneath window at left. Before the table is Seremonda *sitting in chair.* Adele, *the tire-maiden, is putting ribbons in* Seremonda's *hair, two long braids. Water-clock at back of room.*

Adele

What will my lady wear to-night?

Seremonda

I do not care.

Adele

This violet robe is very beautiful.
'T is of Damascus silk.

This crimson I am sure will please your lord.
He likes bright colours passing well.

SEREMONDA

It is too brilliant.

ADELE

This white robe, then?

SEREMONDA

'T is much too young for me; 't would suit a maid
Who takes her first communion, or a bride, —
'T would only fit me for my burial.

ADELE

I pray you, my sweet lady, talk not so.
You're scarce eighteen, and white becomes you well.

SEREMONDA

I feel so old to-night.
The garments of a dowager threescore.
Would suit me best.

ADELE

The day has wearied you.

SEREMONDA

The very soul of me is enervate to-night.

ADELE

Why, then, you should to bed.

SEREMONDA

I'll not to bed.

ADELE

Here is the blue which young Lord Guilhem said
Was just the colour of your eyes.

SEREMONDA

My eyes are darker, much.

ADELE

Sometimes, my lady. They are dark to-night.
When you are merry, then I truly think
They match this colour perfectly.

SEREMONDA

Choose what you will; I said I did not care.

ADELE

The crimson, then, to please your lord.

(SEREMONDA *rises, and* ADELE *is about to slip the robe over* SEREMONDA'S *head when the latter starts back with a shudder.*)

SEREMONDA

It is the hue of blood, blood freshly shed.

ADELE

You wore it yesterweek.

SEREMONDA

Take it away. I'll wear the blue to-night.

(ADELE *puts on the blue robe and a jewelled girdle, after which* SEREMONDA *reseats herself in chair.*)

ADELE

Will this rose garland suit,
Or will you wear a fillet in your hair?

SEREMONDA

The circlet of red gold.

(ADELE *adjusts the circlet.*)

'T is crooked. Put it straight.

(*Enter* GUIDA)

ADELE
(*To* GUIDA)

Is not my lady beautiful to-night?
A shade too pale?

(*To* SEREMONDA.)

Wilt have a touch of red?

SEREMONDA

No, nothing more to-night. And you may go.

ADELE

Art sure, my lady?

SEREMONDA

Go.

(*Exit* ADELE. SEREMONDA *sits with clasped hands in her lap. She does not turn to look at* GUIDA.)

GUIDA

We have a scant five minutes, barely five.
When the last drop of water in the clock
Has dripped away, the hour of fate will come.
I pray you bid him sing no song to-night.

SEREMONDA

You cannot change me.

GUIDA

Nor can I move him, though I begged with tears.
He says he waits your sign.

SEREMONDA

He needs no signal. He will understand,
The moment that he looks upon my face,
And he will sing a song of love to me.
So plainly will he sing that all the world
Will know I hold his heart within this hand.

GUIDA

I'm sure that at the moment you'll relent.
So I have bade him wait until you make
Some sign so plain there can be no mistake.
You cannot give the signal for his death.

SEREMONDA

I cannot! Look you at this amber fan.
I'll drop it on the floor. Then he shall sing.

GUIDA

But it might from your careless fingers slip.

SEREMONDA

I'll break it in my hand.

GUIDA

The fan is priceless.

SEREMONDA
(*Laughing*)

And so is Guilhem's life. We're trivial all,
We women, even in the face of death.

GUIDA

Oh, my sweet sister, think while yet there's time.

SEREMONDA

Think, say you! By your side last night I lay;
I did not sleep. I thought of many things —
So many weary things — until the dawn.
And only this was settled in my mind.
I would not live with Raimon — I could not.
The years spread out before me like the sea,

Each day a lie, each moment a deceit,
Each night a dream of hell.

GUIDA

But other wives have lived who had no love
To give their lords.

SEREMONDA

They have, I've seen them smile.

GUIDA

Choose you some other way.
(*Wringing her hands.*)

SEREMONDA

At first I thought with Guilhem I might fly.
But he would not. O God, why give him both
A conscience and a heart aflame with love?
Then I proposed that Guilhem boldly speak
And leave the issue to the judgment sword.
At first he would, but at the last said no.

GUIDA

Yet he may change his mind.

SEREMONDA

He will not change.
I tell you Raimon or myself must die,
And I would kill him with this slender blade
(*Takes jewelled dagger from table.*)
Were I not sure I'd also kill the love
That Guilhem bears me with the selfsame blow.—
I cannot kill myself — at least not yet.

GUIDA

Oh, Seremonda, do not talk like that.

SEREMONDA

I think the song will cut the Gordian knot.
In Guilhem's heart there is no taint of fear,
And he may fight when Raimon strikes at him:
I'm sure he would if Raimon struck at me. —
At best Raimon is dead; and at the worst,
Guilhem and I die on the selfsame night,
And take the selfsame path to heaven or hell,
Together, hand in hand.

GUIDA

My sister, you are mad — the bride of Death.

SEREMONDA

I'd rather I were his than Raimon's wife.

GUIDA

But why drag Guilhem with you?

SEREMONDA

Why? Then he cannot hold you in his arms,
Nor kiss you on the lips. His will be cold.
I know you love him passing well.

GUIDA

'T is false.

SEREMONDA

I say you love him. Did you like his kiss?
See how you blush, your cheek is like the rose.

GUIDA

Why should I lie to you?

SEREMONDA

We all are liars — we who love.

Guida

I am not. I will tell the truth to you.
If you should say I'll hold me to my lord,
Guilhem is free to love you if he will.
Then if he kissed me once again, but once —
The hot insurgent blood would seize the heart
That is so loyal to you. As it is,
I am your sister and his faithful friend. —
I have not begged you that you give him me.

Seremonda

Give him to you! I'd rather he were dead,
And you and I and all the world were cold. —
I say that he shall sing the song to-night.

Guida
(*Tearfully*)

So thus it ends.
Since you first learned to walk, your baby steps
Were wayward. Wilful were you, and my task
To watch in fear and guard you 'gainst a fall.
You now are grown a woman, and the path
You take to-night will lead you to a steep
From which the fall is death.

SEREMONDA

I cannot help it. Fate has driven me on.
(*Suddenly melting and holding out her arms.*)
Give me one kiss, and say you love me still.
(GUIDA *bursts into tears, falls on her knees, and puts her hand on* SEREMONDA'S *shoulder, who holds her in her arms.*)

GUIDA

I need not tell you what you know so well.
Oh, little sister, listen to me now.

SEREMONDA

Do you remember, very long ago,
When we were children, and upon the beach
I raised a wondrous tower of sand?

GUIDA

Yes, I remember.

SEREMONDA

You warned me it was built too near the waves,
But I was wilful and would have my way.

GUIDA

Yes, you would have your way.

SEREMONDA

I've built another castle, and to-night
You warn me, wilful still, against a wave
Which shall sweep in and wreck my tower wall.
Again I heed you not. I'm wilful still.

GUIDA

Be a good child to-night.

SEREMONDA

Your warm tears melt the ice around my heart,
And yet, e'en now I cannot promise you.
I know not which uncertain path to take.

(*The clangor of beaten metal is heard from the hall and* SEREMONDA *rises. When she reaches the door she pauses as if uncertain and embraces* GUIDA.)

May all good saints befriend me in my need!
Kiss me again. If e'er I win to heaven
By God's good grace, I'll find no saint like you.

(*Exit* SEREMONDA *and* GUIDA.)

CURTAIN

Act III. Scene II.

Hall of castle. Evening of second day. Supper is over. At the far left, near chimney side, facing front, sits Raimon *on a high chair. Next to him is* Seremonda *on chair with footstool. There is a crescent of cushions on the floor, and at right of* Seremonda *is one placed on which no one sits. Then comes* Ermengarda *on chair, a vacant space, and* Guida *seated on cushion. Close to her on her right is* Berguedan *stretched full length on floor. Next is* Vidal *seated on cushion, and at extreme right is* Aimar *on a high chair by the chimney-side.* Barral *is pouring wine into cup on small table at left of* Raimon. Guilhem *is pacing to and fro on right of stage. All tables cleared but one on right, where sit* Amfos *and* Audiart *drinking wine.*

Raimon

This is the evening hour I love the best.
Food we must eat like oxen and like dogs,
But wine brings us the very joy of life.

SEREMONDA

The joy of life from wine?

RAIMON

Wine spurs dull wits and loosens sluggish tongues.
Even good Barral here could talk again
If he would drink enough Roussillon wine.
(BARRAL *makes sign of protest.*)

AIMAR

I pray you, Raimon, drink no more to-night.

RAIMON

May good Saint Bacchus never smile on me
If I go sober to my bed to-night.

AIMAR

Your Bacchus is no saint.

RAIMON

He should be, then. They're many with less right.

ERMENGARDA

"Wine spurs dull wits and loosens sluggish tongues";
And sometimes, too, it lets the devil loose,
As well we women of Roussillon know.
Your father —

RAIMON

My father's settled for his sins ere this.
To-night my page is clean: ask Aimar there.
'T will stand a few pen scratches, and a charge
Of "too much wine" is not a heavy sin.

AIMAR

All sin is heavy, my good lord.

RAIMON

At Aix I met the Monk of Montaudon,
Your brother in the Church, and with him drank
Enough red wine to float a ship at sea.

VIDAL

I'm sure it was the monk put you to bed.

RAIMON

I know not which fell 'neath the table first.
But when, next day, I woke him from his sleep,
No single word of penitence he spoke. —
So drunkenness must be a venial sin.
To-night my heart is merry, and I beg
You all to join with me in revelry.

BERGUEDAN

Right gladly will we drink you cup for cup.

RAIMON

Hear you that, Guilhem? Come and join the ring.
There's a sad gap by Guida you should fill (*laughing*).
But not a drop of wine for you to-night,
Your spirits are already in the clouds.

(GUILHEM *sits between* GUIDA *and* ERMENGARDA.)

VIDAL

He cannot fill himself with wine and sing.

RAIMON

That's why I never ope' my mouth in song.
I'd rather drink. (*Laughs.*)

ERMENGARDA

A song to break your never-ending rank
Of marching flagons would not come amiss.

RAIMON

Another chiding word, my gracious aunt,
And I will sing to you.
(*To* BERGUEDAN.)
My voice is like
The squat green bird's who warbles in the marsh. —
'T is too near supper for you troubadours.
Those lusty villains in the corner there
Shall cheer us with their antics for a while. —
Here you, in motley clad, what can you do?
(AUDIART *comes before the fire.*)

AUDIART

I can do this, my lord — can you?
(*Turns handspring.*)

RAIMON

(*Laughing*)

I could have done its like ten years ago,
But now, alas, my joints are stiff from war.
I have a supple elbow, that is all.

(*He drinks from tankard with exaggerated twist of arm.*)

Well, what more can you do?

AUDIART

This, my good lord.

(AUDIART *turns repeated handsprings inside the circle.*)

RAIMON

The last was better — show me of your best.

(AUDIART *performs several difficult feats. Coins are thrown on the floor which* AUDIART *picks up, and then he bows and returns to the table and flagon.*)

BERGUEDAN

He is a nimble villain, by my faith.

RAIMON

Now, Amfos, show us of your mysteries.
I swear you learned them in the devil's school.

AMFOS

I was his aptest pupil, good my lord.
I have some fire of hell now in my sleeve.
(AMFOS *draws fire from sleeve. Exclamations of astonishment.*)

RAIMON

I wonder could I learn
To light a camp-fire on a rainy night?

AMFOS

Go to my master — he will teach you how.

RAIMON
(*Pretending anger*)

"Go to the devil," say you to my face?
I'll have you whipped.
(AMFOS *performs with glass balls.*)

VIDAL

I've seen fair ladies toss men's hearts like that.

ERMENGARDA

An easy task — they're lighter than the balls.

SEREMONDA

And will not break.

RAIMON

My lady, why speak you so bitterly?
What know you of men's hearts?

SEREMONDA

What I have conned in books, no more.
I found the study dull and wearisome.

ERMENGARDA

And never put your learning to good use,
With gallant youths about?

SEREMONDA

I dared not. You were always watching me.

ERMENGARDA
(*Furiously*)

I watching you!

RAIMON
(*Interrupting*)

Dear aunt, frown not, she only juggles words.
Come, Amfos, one more trick.

AMFOS

My good lord, will you loan to me a coin?
I can succeed with silver, but 't is best
If done with gold.

RAIMON
(*To* BARRAL)

Give him a silver coin and watch it well.

(BARRAL *tosses* AMFOS *a silver coin which he catches. He pretends to swallow it, and produces it from his ear. He puts it in his sleeve, and takes it from his shoe. He tosses it in the air. It disappears. He calls to it, and pretends to catch it in his hand. He tosses it again, calls to it repeatedly, and turns to* RAIMON.)

AMFOS

Alas, good Count, my magic is at fault.
I cannot give you back your coin. It's gone.
'T is difficult with silver, as I said.

RAIMON

(*Laughing*)

I've seen the trick before, and kept my gold.
You are the dupe, not I.

(*They throw coins to* AMFOS, *and he bows and returns to the table and flagon. All the time* RAIMON *is drinking, and shows more and more the influence of his potations.*)

ERMENGARDA

He has an impish look upon his face.
I think it was no joke where he was schooled.

AIMAR

And hell is not a joke.

AUDIART

There is a man below who has a bear;
He is from Italy.

RAIMON

Which, man or bear?

ERMENGARDA

I care not. To this hall he does not come,
Or I'm to bed. I'll not be food for bears.

RAIMON

Fear not, my worthy aunt. He'll not touch you,
Or he's no judge of meat. He hath an eye
On Guida, who is tenderer by far.
(*To* GUILHEM)
She is a juicy morsel, is she not?
And you could eat her, though you are no bear.
(*Laughs.*)

ERMENGARDA

It frets me not that Guida is his choice.
I'm food for neither man nor bear.

RAIMON

Well, gentle aunt, the bear shall stay below.
(*To* BERGUEDAN)
And we will listen to the lark from Spain —
Or nightingale, whichever suits him best.
Then we will hear from Vidal if he please.
And last from Guilhem, if he have the strength,
To tear himself away from Guida's side.

BERGUEDAN

My good lord, I will do my best. Although
By better singers, I must meet eclipse,

My voice is good enough to start withal;
And, like the wise lord of the Cana feast,
You save the best wine for the last.

RAIMON

You all are good, I know not which is best.
I am a better judge of wine than song.

BERGUEDAN

I wish that you would hear from Vidal first:
He did not eat as much as I.

VIDAL

I did not; and I think no one
Could rival him — unless it be the bear.
My voice is not its best, yet I will sing.
(VIDAL *rises from the cushion and takes his place in front of the fire.*)

RAIMON

At Beziers they told me of a song
In which you praised your prowess in the field,
And told Sir Dragoman of knightly feats
You could perform with level lance in rest. —
You only lacked the horse you begged of him.

VIDAL
(*Haughtily*)

My patrons shower costly gifts on me
To please themselves and for their own fair fame. —
I do not beg.

RAIMON

I beg your pardon for my shabby word.
I beg you, sir, most humbly for a song.
(*They all applaud* RAIMON'S *assumed humility.*)

VIDAL

I sometimes use an awkward word myself:
The song is good, and I will give it you;
But first I'll sing a beauteous lady's praise,
New writ to-day.

GUIDA

I'm sick of love-songs. Sing of war.

RAIMON

"War," say you, my sweet sister, and to-night?
Well, Vidal, 't is her choice, we wait for you.
(VIDAL *gives* GUIDA *a glance of mingled re-*

proach and adoration. He sings with many gestures and with great affectation.)

VIDAL

Sir Dragoman, had I a goodly steed,
Soon should my enemies for mercy plead;
For even when they hear my whispered name,
They fear me more than quail the falcon's greed;
So widespread my renown, so great my fame.

When I have donned my glittering coat of mail,
And girt my sword, Hugh's gift that cannot fail,
Whither I go, the earth doth shake with fear·
No foes I meet that do not 'fore me pale,
And yield me place; nought doth their pride avail,
So great their terror when my step they hear.

Of chivalry and love I am the flower,
Bravest among the brave — in lady's bower
Is none more courteous and more debonnaire,
Nor in the battle-field of greater power;
So that my enemies in terror cower
At thought of me. None to confront me dare.

(*All applaud heartily and* VIDAL *bows his acknowledgment.*)

RAIMON

What man is this! He cleaves a helm
And breaks a woman's heart with equal skill.

What havoc he must work in poor Provence.
I'd hate to pluck his beard.

ERMENGARDA

I'd match a kitchen wench against the man.
I have a maid who'd beat him with her broom.

RAIMON

Now, Berguedan, it is your turn.

(VIDAL *takes his seat, and* BERGUEDAN *rises. His story is accompanied by notes from the lute.*)

BERGUEDAN

The Lord Saint Leidier was a troubadour.
Young was he, brave and strong and debonnaire.
He loved the fair wife of rich Polignac,
And Bellisenda was the lady's name.

RAIMON

The same old characters; we know them well.
A lady — lover — and her jealous lord.

BERGUEDAN

The lady liked Saint Leidier passing well,
But not too well to walk the path discreet.

He sang to her; he gazed into her eyes;
He held her hand — and kissed it — that was all.

ERMENGARDA

I like her not. I know she did not keep
The proper path.

AIMAR

The path to heaven is narrow. Few there be
Who find it, searching with an honest heart.

BERGUEDAN

Patient was young Saint Leidier, but, at last,
He grew insistent that the lady grant
Some favour warmer than a cold white hand.
He kissed her lips, she making sham defence,
And shamming anger, as fair ladies do,
And have, and will, until the world is dead.

GUIDA

And are there any ladies leal and true
And loyal to their lords?

BERGUEDAN

There may be — one or two.

(GUIDA *makes gesture of protest.*)

This lady swore she would not grant her love —
Unless the Count, her husband, bade her yield.

ERMENGARDA

She should be safe in that.

BERGUEDAN

The Count was named Heraclius; and he
Was strong, and dark and violent.
The last to be complacent to a wife
Who trod the primrose path with careless feet.
But young Saint Leidier would not woo despair:
He climbed the hill to Polignac one day,
And, entering the castle, met its lord,
And greeted him, a smile upon his face.

RAIMON

Had I been there I'd spoilt his smiling face.

BERGUEDAN

"How now, Saint Leidier?" asked the surly Count;
"Has laughter come to you at early dawn?
Some fair dame has been kind to you I swear."
"Ah, my good Count," said Leidier, "I win
Love favours slowly and with toil and pain.
My lady swears she'll none of me, unless —
Her selfish husband bid her acquiesce."

GUIDA

A selfish husband not to share his wife?

Berguedan

When Leidier told him this, the Count laughed long.
"You're beaten. Go seek solace where you may."
"Not yet," said Leidier. "I'm not beaten yet.
The husband likes to sing; I make his songs:
He loves to sing them to his pretty wife.
I've written one which bids her pliant be.
She'll think her lord has given his consent,
Or, if she understand, she still will yield
In hot resentment at his foolishness."

Ermengarda

What said Heraclius to this?

Berguedan

"A good plot, by Our Lady!" cried the Count.
"A merry song. I bid you teach it me."

Raimon

And did he teach him?

Berguedan

The Count of Polignac, he learned the song,
And sang it to his wife, whom Leidier loved.
Listen, and I will sing it to you now: —

Fair lady, I am sent to you, —
'T will all be plain ere I am done, —
To greet you on behalf of one
Whose love for you supports and cheers.
And, lady, you need have no fears;
False messenger between you two
He ne'er will be that sings here now.

Whoever else may plead and woo,
All other loves I pray you shun.
Each day he shines the more, and none
Seems worth a thought when he appears.
So when toward love your fancy veers,
Love him, I beg, and warmly, too, —
No lady should reject his vow.

By this fair knight — I know not who —
Refuse no longer to be won.
For my sake be not such a nun;
But gain the love that perseveres,
In peace and concord through the years,
What I advise 't is best you do.
Fear not, I order and allow.

AIMAR

It was a wicked plot.

GUIDA

How did it end?

Ermengarda

It ended as such stories always end,
Or Berguedan had picked some other tale
To poison us withal.

Berguedan

Their love continued many happy years,
And many perfect songs he sang to her,
Until —

Raimon

Until the Count discovered them, one day,
And, with a dagger 'twixt the lover's ribs,
Cut all the music from his artist soul
As one might slit a viol's sounding-board.

Berguedan

He was not caught, my lord.

Raimon

Why do they give the lover all the wits,
The husband addled brains?

Guida

I wonder why?

ERMENGARDA

I grant you this, my ribald troubadour.
I never heard a story better told.

RAIMON

We're debtors all.
Now, Guilhem, sing to us, and then to bed.
You all are drunk. I fear the winding stairs
Will play strange antics with your stumbling feet.

(GUILHEM *rises and looks at* SEREMONDA *enquiringly, but she makes no sign.*)

GUILHEM

What shall I sing? (*Another long silence.*)

RAIMON

Sing what you will; — I think your hand is caught
In Guida's girdle. — Fie upon you, man.

(GUIDA *looks at* SEREMONDA *entreatingly.* SEREMONDA *and* GUILHEM *look into each other's eyes.* SEREMONDA *breaks fan.*)

GUIDA

May God preserve and save us all!

ERMENGARDA

Truth! You are careless. Broken straight across.
The fan is priceless. For a hundred years
It's wafted perfumed breezes in this hall.

RAIMON

It's but a fan. Come, Guilhem, sing.

GUILHEM

What says my lady?

SEREMONDA

Sing.

(GUILHEM *looks at* SEREMONDA, *not* GUIDA, *as he sings.* COUNT RAIMON *looks wonderingly at* GUILHEM, GUIDA, *and* SEREMONDA, *his face growing flushed and black.*)

GUILHEM

The very day one glimpse of you I caught,
When God was pleased to let me see your face,
My heart took leave of every other thought,
And every wish — except for you — gave place.

At first my soul with reverence was fraught:
I worshipped from afar your wondrous grace.
Your hair a golden halo, heaven-wrought,
Your eyes were stars, beaming in distant space.

But now the joy of love to you I've taught:
Your lips I kiss, your body I embrace:
Your very soul is mine. The world is nought:
Life cannot hide our love, nor Death efface.

(*When* GUILHEM *finishes*, RAIMON'S *anger bursts into flame. He utters an inarticulate oath, and draws the dagger from his girdle. He strikes at* GUILHEM, *but* BARRAL *throws himself in front of Guilhem, and the blade enters* BARRAL'S *shoulder.* BARRAL *falls into* BERGUEDAN'S *arms.* RAIMON *is about to spring at* GUILHEM *again when* AIMAR *comes between them, the crucifix held high above his head.*)

AIMAR

Beware the wrath of God!
Dare not again the anger of his Church!

(RAIMON *staggers back into his chair, the dagger clattering on the floor. All gather around* BARRAL.)

GUILHEM

Why did you risk you life for me?

GUIDA

Is he much hurt?

SEREMONDA

For God's sake, say he will not die!

BERGUEDAN

The blade stopped at the bone. He will not die.

VIDAL

God! How he bleeds.

(GUIDA *brings cloth from table, and with it* BERGUEDAN *staunches* BARRAL'S *wound.* SEREMONDA *steps back, and* GUILHEM *goes to her.*)

ERMENGARDA

The devil of Roussillon loose again!

RAIMON

But one! They're seven devils laughing here
Within this swept and garnished soul.

(RAIMON *breaks into a fit of laughter, strikes himself fiercely on the breast, then catching sight of* GUILHEM *by* SEREMONDA'S *side, he becomes furious, rises to his feet, and rushing toward them, falls senseless to the floor.* AIMAR *and* VIDAL *go to him and the former turns* RAIMON *face upward.*)

VIDAL

He is not hurt.

AIMAR

Go, all of you, and get you to your rest.
Go sleep in peace until to-morrow dawns.
Then may God save us all.

(SEREMONDA *goes to* GUILHEM *and clings to his shoulder.*)

CURTAIN

Act IV

Act IV. Scene I.

Morning of third day. Village of Roussillon, Clara *is washing the table in the arbour.*

Clara

(*Sings*)

Love is the wine of life,—
Let's drink it, you and I.

(*Enter* Vidal *and* Berguedan *by street from castle. They are serious and worried*)

Vidal

The man was mad to sing that song last night.

Berguedan

Naught saved him but his master's drunkenness.

Vidal

Lucky for Guilhem and for Barral, too,
Count Raimon was too blind with wine to kill.—
What will he do to-day?

BERGUEDAN

He will not miss his aim again.

VIDAL

The day is cursed.
The wind is almost dead, yet every leaf
Shivers with fear. Even your face is pale.
I wish I had not come to Roussillon.

(CLARA *appears at entrance to arbour.*)

CLARA

Sir Meddler and Sir Mocker, by the mass!

(VIDAL *and* BERGUEDAN *do not notice her.*)

BERGUEDAN

The Count still sleeps?

VIDAL

He has not left his chamber yet.

CLARA

What are you plotting; an affair of state?

(VIDAL *and* BERGUEDAN *look at her, but do not answer.*)

You have forgotten Hebe, that is plain.
It is a sultry day: the air is dry;
My wine is wet. What say you to a drink?

VIDAL

No, do not trouble us.

CLARA

You were in trouble ere I oped my mouth.
No doubt tormented by your grievous sins.
Guilhem is making his confession now:
His soul is saintly innocence to yours.

BERGUEDAN

Is Guilhem in the church?

CLARA

He entered near an hour ago.

BERGUEDAN

Bring us two stoups of wine.

(VIDAL *and* BERGUEDAN *enter arbour and take seats at table.* CLARA *goes into the inn.*)

VIDAL

We'll wait to see his face. —

BERGUEDAN

The lad is brave enough. He will not flinch.

(*Enter* CLARA *with two stoups of wine which she places on table*)

CLARA

Be careful of your sleeve, the table's wet.

VIDAL

(*To* BERGUEDAN)

Where think you they will meet?

CLARA

Who meet? The table's wet, I say.
(*To* VIDAL)
I see you keep the chain about your neck.
(*To* BERGUEDAN)
Have you your ring as well?
(CLARA *takes* BERGUEDAN'S *hand in hers and looks at ring.*)

BERGUEDAN
(*To* VIDAL)

If we watch one, we're sure to see them meet.

CLARA

What! Neither of you won her favour yet?
Is Seremonda cold to both of you?
(*Neither answers her.*)
I do not wonder if you've lost your tongue.
You're worse than Barral.

BERGUEDAN

Come, Hebe, bluntly, we would be alone.

CLARA

You do not like my pretty prattle, then?
Well, call me when you want your flagons filled.
(*Exit* CLARA, *singing.* RAIMON *comes slowly down the road from the castle. His eyes are on the ground and he mutters as he walks.* BARRAL *follows close behind him. The latter has a bandage on his shoulder.*)

BERGUEDAN

Here comes Count Raimon now.

VIDAL

Look at his face.

BERGUEDAN

The fire of hell shines in his eyes.

(RAIMON *paces up and down across square.* GUILHEM *appears at church door and meets* RAIMON *face to face, the latter standing at the foot of the steps. They look into each other's eyes with no word of greeting.* GUILHEM *shows no sign of fear.*)

RAIMON

Go to the armoury and bring me here
Two boar spears, like to like.

GUILHEM

I'll hasten, my good lord.

(GUILHEM *exits up road to castle.* RAIMON *walks to and fro, his hands clenched behind his back, his eyes fixed on the ground. He pauses in front of* BARRAL, *but does not lift his eyes as he speaks.*)

RAIMON

So, Barral, pious Guilhem lied to me.
He has no love for Guida, that is clear.
His song last night told plainly whom he loves.
(RAIMON *crosses the stage and stops in front of* BARRAL.)
This morning he shall bare his soul to me.
I would not harm him, for he is a boy,
And sang as Seremonda bade him sing. —
She's not a child. I'll wring the heart of her,
I'll wring her heart until it oozes blood.
(BARRAL *makes gesture of entreaty.*)
Get you to hell!
Or lift your mute appealing hands to heaven.
You cannot move me.
(*Again* RAIMON *crosses stage and returns.*)
Through Guilhem only can I hurt her much. —
That's bad for Guilhem, for I hate him not. —
I fear the lover or the lord must die —
The jealous lord.
(RAIMON *looks into* BARRAL'S *face with a sinister smile.*)
If Guilhem dies, he goes straightway to heaven —

He's better far in heaven than I in hell.

(RAIMON *laughs bitterly.*)

Your hands move not, your lips are mute,
Yet your entreating eyes are eloquent. —
If I can think of any curious plan
By which I may at Seremonda strike
And not harm Guilhem, I will follow it.

(GUILHEM *enters and gives the boar spears to* RAIMON. *The latter balances first one and then the other in his hand. Takes one and then the other, holds it above his head and strikes with it. He studies them carefully, then hands them back to* GUILHEM *and asks:*)

Which think you is the better of the two?

GUILHEM

They are twin spears, and like
As I could find upon the armoury wall.

RAIMON

And yet they differ. Look again, —
Look carefully and tell me which you choose.

(GUILHEM *tests first one and then the other spear. He gives them back to* RAIMON.)

GUILHEM

That in your right hand has the straighter shaft
And slightly keener blade. By a hair's breadth
It is the better weapon.

RAIMON

Take it, and I will hold to this.
Meet an me hour hence beneath the oak,
The great oak in the distant wood.

GUILHEM

I will not fail you, my good lord.

(*As* GUILHEM *passes the shrine he pauses for a moment, kneels, crosses himself, and then hurries away toward the castle.* RAIMON *watches him as he kneels, a sinister smile on his face, and when he has disappeared* RAIMON *turns to* BARRAL *and laughs mirthlessly.*)

RAIMON
(*Pointing*)

This is the forest road.
He goes the longer way. I wonder why?

(RAIMON *enters the street leading to the forest and* BARRAL *starts to follow him.*)

Go, get you to the castle. (BARRAL *hesitates.*)
Go, I say.

(*Exit* RAIMON *down street to forest; exit* BARRAL *up road to castle.* VIDAL *and* BERGUEDAN *have been watching and listening from the arbour. They now enter the square together.*)

VIDAL

His face was like a mask.

BERGUEDAN

His voice was like to one who talks in sleep.

VIDAL

What would he with the boar spears? Were they swords
I'd think it meant a duel to the death.

BERGUEDAN

With swords and armour 't is a sport for boys.
With boar spears and unmailed, one man must die.

VIDAL

You think they'll fight?

BERGUEDAN

I am not sure. I'd like to follow them.
I would were I not clad in glaring red.
Your sombre green is like the forest leaves.

VIDAL

I'll spy on them.
I'll wager what you will I am not seen.

BERGUEDAN

My ring against your chain.

(VIDAL *exits street to forest,* BERGUEDAN *road leading to castle.* CLARA *comes to door and sees them as they disappear and* CLARA *says:*)

CLARA

They've gone, and have not paid me for the wine.
How strange they were as if they feared some ill.
There is an evil spell upon the day.

CURTAIN

Act IV. Scene II.

Hall of Castle, evening of third day. Berguedan *walks before the fire, his hands clasped behind him, evidently troubled and in deep thought).*

(*Enter* Vidal *hurriedly*)

Vidal

The chain is yours.

(*He takes it from neck and hands it to* Berguedan.)

Berguedan

What care I for your chain? He caught you, then?
You know not what has happened in the wood?

Vidal

I'd almost reached the oak when a dry twig
Cracked 'neath my footstep and the frenzied Count
Turned on me with the boar spear in his hand.

He swore a fearful oath he'd pierce my heart
If e'er he saw my ferret face again.

BERGUEDAN

A ferret! By the mass, he flattered you.
You were a donkey stumbling in the path.
I wish he'd kept his oath, you clumsy fool.

VIDAL

I'd give three times the value of the chain
If I were but an honest league away.
There is a curse upon these castle walls,
The smell of blood, the numbing chill of death,
Is in the tainted air.

BERGUEDAN

You're like a frightened child
Who sees a ghost in every shadowy nook.

VIDAL

God knows there's reason for my fear!

BERGUEDAN

What think you happened in the distant wood?

VIDAL

I think they fought beneath the giant oak, —
The Count came back alone.

BERGUEDAN

How looked the Count?

VIDAL

A little hour ago
I had a glimpse as up the stairs he came.
His face was pale, his eyes as red as fire,
And on his left arm was his mantle hung
As if beneath its folds something was hid.
His glance was furtive, and he swore at me
A dreadful oath. To curses I am used,
But not an oath like that.

BERGUEDAN

Would Guilhem raise his hand against his lord?
Perhaps he took to flight and now is safe
Nested in some snug castle in the North.

VIDAL

Guilhem took not to flight.
You saw his face, you heard him when he said,
"Truly I will not fail you, my good lord."

BERGUEDAN

I wish we had not come within these walls.
This is no place for meddlers. By the mass,
I think so tangled are these threads of life
They cannot be unsnarled. The hand of Death
Will break them.

VIDAL

And mayhap us as well; let's go at once.

BERGUEDAN

And bring suspicion swiftly on our heels?

VIDAL

Do what you will. I shall prepare for flight.
I say there is a curse upon these walls.

(*Exit* VIDAL. BERGUEDAN *paces the floor a little while and then follows* VIDAL.)

(SEREMONDA *enters with* ADELE)

ADELE

The crimson would have suited you the best,
And put new colour in your pallid cheeks.

SEREMONDA

Am I so pale to-night?

ADELE

You're very pale, my lady, and your robe
Makes you appear more wan. The garland, too; —
I pray you let me change it. You are ill.

SEREMONDA

My faintness has not left me since I fell
In Guida's arms.

ADELE

I'll run and get a cordial from your room.

SEREMONDA

No; help me to the window.
(SEREMONDA *goes to the window, leaning on* ADELE'S *shoulder.*)
How soft and fragrant is the wind to-night,
'T is like a lover's fingers in my hair.
(*There is a cry, and* SEREMONDA *starts with hand at her throat and stares into the darkness.*)
What was that cry?

Adele

Only a gull dropping upon the waves.
You've heard its like a thousand times before.

Seremonda

It sounded like a man's last dying wail.

Adele

They say that in the gull's white breast there
dwells
The soul of some lost sailor drowned at sea—
You should to bed, my lady.

Seremonda

To bed! I could not rest. I am not well,
But not so ill as to be put to bed.
We should have news of Guilhem. It is late.

Adele

He may have lost his way.

Seremonda

You think he's safe?

ADELE

I'm sure he's safe, only a little late.

SEREMONDA

May the good saints preserve him from all harm!
I'm better now, Adele, and you may go.

ADELE

You feel quite well?

SEREMONDA

Quite well — Good-night. You're very good to me.

ADELE

Good-night, my lady.

(*Exit* ADELE. SEREMONDA *looks after her smiling, then turns to the window. Another cry from the sea.*)

SEREMONDA

The gull again! I wonder if lost souls
Dwell in the bodies of the wandering birds.
I'll ask good Aimar. He will know.

(*Enter* GUIDA. *She is pale and frightened*)

GUIDA

Count Raimon has returned — alone.
Where Guilhem is, there is no one to tell.

SEREMONDA

You think him dead?

GUIDA

I know he went with Raimon to the wood.
Each had a boar spear in his hand.

SEREMONDA

So went they yestermorn. To-day they had
No other thought except to hunt the boar.

GUIDA

No other thought! He heard the song last night —
Your song — proclaiming Guilhem's love for you.
It was the quiet of the crouching wolf.
You should have seen his eyes — his dreadful eyes —

When first he left his bed and entered here.
I slipped behind the arras, faint with dread.
Your lord stood brooding by the chimney-side.
And Barral sat shivering before the fire.
I held my breath till Raimon said at last,
"I'm glad I did not kill the lad, last night."

SEREMONDA

Those were his words? I tell you, Guilhem's safe.

GUIDA

Safe! — and he went with Raimon to the wood!
And Raimon had a boar spear in his hand!
And Raimon back again alone!

SEREMONDA

But Guilhem had a boar spear, too.
I say he lives.

GUIDA

Your saying will not bring the dead to life —
If he is dead — I've questioned every one.
Raimon could tell, but he is like a beast.
When he returned — it was an hour ago —

He would not answer me a single word,
But looked at me with eyes as red as fire.
My heart was still and cold at sight of him.
Oh, Seremonda, I am filled with fear.
When saw you Guilhem last?

SEREMONDA

At early dawn a moment ere he went.
'T was in the shadow of the hawthorn hedge,
Where we have parted many times before.
He held me in his arms and kissed my brow,
He would not kiss my lips, although I begged
That he would press them once. He shook his head,
And smiled at me and wiped my tears away.
So kind was he I did not miss the kiss,
Until he'd left me and it was too late.
A long time looked he in my eyes and said —
"Sweetheart, we may ne'er ride across the fields,
Nor reach the castle with the lilied moat:
Yet somewhere we shall find the joy of life,
We three together — you and I — and Love."

(GUIDA *bursts into tears.* SEREMONDA *tries to comfort her.*)

(*Enter* AIMAR, *who goes directly to* GUIDA)

GUIDA

Help me, good father, I am filled with fear.
Did Guilhem go to you to-day?

AIMAR

He came to me before the sun was high.
And made confession. When he left my side
He was prepared to meet, with honest heart,
What Life or Death might have in store for him.

GUIDA

I fear Death brought the message to his soul.

SEREMONDA

Tell us that Guilhem lives.

AIMAR

Only the good God knows.

(*Enter* RAIMON, *who stands looking in fire*)

GUIDA

He knows — who enters like a padding wolf.

AIMAR

He, too, is in God's hand for good or ill. —
So are we all.

(*Enter* BERGUEDAN *and* VIDAL)

BERGUEDAN

What luck, my lord?

RAIMON

I killed but one to-day.

VIDAL

And where is Guilhem?

RAIMON

I parted with him underneath the oak.
We will not wait for him.

(RAIMON *strikes with handle of dagger on shield hanging on the wall and the servants flock in; also* ERMENGARDA *enters. They take seats at table beginning left of stage,* VIDAL, GUIDA, BERGUEDAN, ERMENGARDA, RAIMON, SEREMONDA, *and* AIMAR. *There is a vacant place at* SEREMONDA'S *right for Guilhem. The table is silent.*)

ERMENGARDA

Guilhem is very late to-night.
(*To* RAIMON)
Where did you leave him?

RAIMON

Beneath the great oak in the distant woods.

AIMAR

You have not sent to search for him, my lord?

RAIMON

I've made no search.

AIMAR

You think no harm has come to him?

RAIMON

How can I tell?
(*There is a long silence. All eat but* SEREMONDA.)
You touch no food to-night.

SEREMONDA

I am not hungry.

RAIMON
(*To* SEREMONDA)

I bade the cook to make a special dish.
It's like you 've never tasted, I am sure.

SEREMONDA

I have no wish for food to-night.
(*The servant places a platter with silver cover before* SEREMONDA.)

RAIMON

I hope that you will eat to please your lord,
Whose heart is grieved to see you look so pale.
(SEREMONDA *rises and points at dish.*)

SEREMONDA

What meat is this?
(RAIMON *looks up at* SEREMONDA, *a malevolent smile on his face. He rises slowly and looks into* SEREMONDA'S *eyes.*)

RAIMON

It is the heart of Guilhem whom I slew
This morning 'neath the great oak in the wood.

AIMAR

Guilhem is dead!

RAIMON

He's dead.
He would not fight. I killed him with this hand.

AIMAR

Cain slew but one.

(SEREMONDA, *clutching at her throat, her face convulsed with horror, staggers back to the window, stumbles up the step, and turns to* RAIMON.)

SEREMONDA

Such sweet meat have you given me, my lord,
I ne'er will eat again.

GUIDA

O, Seremonda! Little child of mine!

SEREMONDA

I take the selfsame path to heaven or hell —
I care not which if I am by his side.

(SEREMONDA *glides through the window.*

There is a flutter of her white robe as she leaps into the sea. All rush toward the window. RAIMON *is last, but he throws the others aside, seizes the bar, and struggles madly to push by it. He finally staggers back with a cry of agony.*)

RAIMON

And so it ends! O, cursed fiends of hell!
Why did you bid me murder those I love?
They both are dead, and in the selfsame path
They walk together, happy, hand in hand —
They shall not leave me here.

(RAIMON *takes dagger from the table and plunges it into his breast. He staggers and falls to the floor.* AIMAR *lifts him in his arms.*)

AIMAR

Look at this cross. Confess that you have sinned.

RAIMON

I am a sinner. — May God pardon me. —
Come, Death! — Make haste! — I pray you, let me pass.

Open the gate! I must upon my way.
O, Seremonda! Guilhem! Wait for me!
I follow close behind. I am alone.

(RAIMON *falls back and dies.*)

CURTAIN

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